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New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 35 *(continued)*

Law of the sea

Report of the Secretary-General (A/49/631 and Corr.1)

Draft resolution (A/49/L.47)

Mr. Yousif (Sudan) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: At the threshold of the legal regime of seas and oceans with the coming into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea we should recall with appreciation and gratitude all those whose efforts, knowledge and dedication, since 1967, made it possible to arrive at the Convention, including the latest consultations, led by the Secretary-General, which led to the agreement on the implementation of Part XI of the Convention signed on 28 July 1994.

On this occasion, we have to commend the unremitting and constructive efforts of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea which helped to expand acceptance and application of the provisions of the Convention in a rational and harmonious fashion.

It may be appropriate here to highlight the participation by my country in arriving at the Convention. Sudan participated as much as possible, in the consultations which led to the Convention. Sudan was Rapporteur to the sessions of the Third Conference of the Law of the Sea from the first session which started on 15 December 1972 through the eleventh resumed session, which ended by Sudan's signing of the Convention on 28 December 1982. Sudan also took part in the Preparatory Commission of the International Sea Bed Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea as Vice-Chairman of the Fourth Special Commission and recently in the consultations conducted by the Secretary-General which led to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention signed by Sudan in New York, on 29 July 1994.

The entry into force of the Convention on the Law of the Sea as of 16 November 1994 is an occasion for us to refer to the Declaration of Principles adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-fifth session in 1970, which proclaimed that: "The sea-bed and ocean floor, and the subsoil thereof, beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, as well as the resources of the area, are the common heritage of mankind [and] shall not be subject to appropriation by any means by States or persons." The Declaration also stipulated that "the area shall be open to use exclusively for peaceful purposes by all States — without discrimination". *(Resolution 2749-XXV, paras. 1, 2 and 5)*

The Declaration should be the starting-point for work towards the achievement of the universality of the Convention and the legal system it puts in place. This regime is the minimum that has been possible to reach between countries of the North and the South, between the poor and the rich, with regard to the maintenance of

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freedom of navigation, trade and communications as well as the maintenance of the legal regime of the maritime environment, the protection of that environment from plundering and irrational use of non-renewable resources and preserving the special interests of States that differ from one State to the other. Thus mankind's prosperity may be ensured by full compliance with the provisions of the Convention since it has legal force and is unprecedented in the history of Treaties.

The application of all the provisions of the Convention without exception by all countries will be the main guarantee of the stability of the maritime regime established by the Convention, in consonance with the concept that the enjoyment of rights and benefits should be concomitant with the shouldering of obligations and duties so that an equitable and comprehensive maritime regime may be established.

The entry of the Convention into force, marks the beginning of a very difficult and demanding phase that has to do with the building of the institutions of the maritime regime created by the Convention. In addition to the necessary political will, that phase will require the availability of resources and the selection of the most qualified elements to undertake the tasks involved.

The entry of the Convention into force will also have far-reaching effects on the international community in general and, in particular, on all international organizations involved in marine affairs.

The Secretary-General, in his report contained in document A/49/631, reviewed in Part One thereof the Developments relating to the Convention on the Law of the Sea and in Part Two the Activities of the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs.

We must draw attention also to the fact that entry of the Convention into force will entail additional financial and technical burdens on the developing countries. Consequently, the Secretary-General should provide support and technical assistance to the developing countries and the least-developed countries, in particular in the coming period, through the specialized bodies of the Secretariat in order to help those countries to meet their obligations under the Convention, particularly those obligations which require expertise and the availability of studies and information. This effort should be accompanied by wide dissemination of information by the United Nations and the Department for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea and the Department of Public Information with a view to promoting better international understanding of the provisions and consequences of the Convention. In this regard we commend the initiatives of the Secretary-General as outlined in paragraph C of his report wherein he called on international organizations involved in marine affairs to contemplate further actions to be taken as a consequence of the entry into force of the Convention.

One of the major contributions of the Convention in the field of international peace and security is the part relating to the settlement of disputes through the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

My delegation is satisfied with the progress made in establishing the Tribunal and electing its judges starting with the decision of the States Parties in their meeting in New York on 21 and 22 November. My delegation hopes that the States Parties will be able to deal with all outstanding questions of detail relating to the establishment of the Tribunal so that it may start to function on time as agreed.

Given our awareness of the historic importance of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, my delegation has joined the sponsors of the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.47, to signify full agreement with the requirements included in the draft resolution which, we believe, will contribute to the application of the Convention, and to the establishment of its institutions and mechanisms. We believe the draft resolution contains all that is needed to achieve these goals.

In this connection, we thank Ambassador Satya Nandan for his efforts in preparing the draft resolution, for his valuable contributions and his initiative in conducting the informal consultations that preceded the drafting of text of the draft resolution.

Sudan participated in the inaugural meeting of the International Seabed Authority, held in Kingston, Jamaica from 16 through 18 November 1994. We wish on this occasion to pay tribute to the Jamaican people for their hospitality. The selection of Jamaica as the headquarters of the International Seabed Authority is a source of pride for all developing countries. We are aware that Jamaica will have to shoulder a number of burdens as a result of this selection. However, we are confident that it is fully prepared to perform its duties, as it did throughout the preparatory stages.

Mr. Owada (Japan): At the outset, I should like to express, on behalf of the Government of Japan, my sincere gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, as well as to the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Mr. Hans Corell, and his staff for the informative reports and other publications they have prepared on the development of the law of the sea.

I wish to begin my observations on the present item by joining other delegations in expressing my profound satisfaction at the fact that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea finally entered into force on 16 November 1994. This achievement was made possible by the almost unanimous adoption of the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI at the resumed meetings of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, last July. The Agreement paved the way for the convening of the first meeting, in Kingston, Jamaica, last month, of the International Seabed Authority, with universal participation on the occasion of the entry into force of the Convention. More than 130 delegations, including my own, celebrated the inauguration of the International Seabed Authority, demonstrating that both the Convention and the Authority have the blessing and enthusiastic support of the entire international community.

It is true that we have had to wait longer than expected for the entry into force of the Convention. Although we reached an agreement on the international framework for management and control of deep-sea-bed mining as part XI of the Convention in 1982, many States expressed their dissatisfaction with part XI at the time of its adoption, inasmuch as it contained many controversial provisions that would have had prohibitive effects on the development of commercially based seabed mining. Those States — mainly industrialized ones — refrained from ratifying the Convention, while developing States were fulfilling the requirements for its entry into force. It has been commonly recognized in recent years that if those stumbling-blocks had remained in part XI, the Convention would have lacked universal applicability, and would thereby have jeopardized the stable legal order of the sea.

Japan, as one of the world's leading maritime nations and, in particular, one of the pioneer investors in deep-sea-bed mining, has made every possible effort, in cooperation with other like-minded countries, to overcome these difficulties so that a viable regime could be secured, a regime based on universal participation and reflecting the political and economic changes that have taken place since the Convention was adopted. I am extremely gratified at the fruitful result that we have finally been able to produce.

I wish to take this opportunity to express the appreciation of my delegation to the former Secretary-General, Mr. Pérez de Cuéllar, for initiating a series of informal consultations for the purpose of redefining the framework for the deep-sea-bed, as well as to the present Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for carrying forward the work of his predecessor.

Under their leadership, the participants in the consultations, from both industrialized and developing countries, have succeeded in adopting the Agreement relating to the Implementation of part XI. By streamlining the structure of the Authority and removing the excessive regulations and financial burdens placed on commercial entities and sponsoring States, the Agreement provides a framework for improving the climate for investing in deep-sea-bed mining.

Another equally important development was achieved last month. The first meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Law of the Sea decided by consensus to hold the first election of the members of the Tribunal in August 1996, instead of within six months of the entry into force of the Convention, as provided for in annex VI of the Convention. My delegation welcomes this important decision, as the postponement provides additional potential States parties with the opportunity to nominate their candidates and thus ensures the representation of the world's principal legal systems and equitable geographical representation in the composition of the members of the Tribunal. My delegation believes that this is truly an important achievement in that it will further promote universal participation in the Convention.

As a result of the delay in the entry into force of the Convention due to the problems with part XI, the general regime of the maritime order contained in other parts of the Convention has been rendered somewhat less stable by the impasse in regard to deep-sea-bed mining. While the international community awaited the adoption and the entry into force of the Convention, the legal order of the sea was gradually undergoing structural changes, such as the emergence of claims for the establishment of an exclusive economic zone and a tendency among coastal States to extend their national jurisdiction to the outer seas. The emergence of a number of new problems of a global nature in such areas as the environment, development in science and technology and drug trafficking also accelerated these changes. The entry into force of the Convention, with its promising prospect of universal application, is expected not only to bring an end to the serious legal disorder resulting from the unilateral extension of jurisdiction by coastal States, but to provide a solid, integrated legal basis for a new international cooperation on the use of the sea.

Throughout the 12 years since the adoption of the Convention, Japan has contributed, both as a signatory and as a certifying State, to the development of deep-seabed mining. In particular, Japan has always promoted the global objective of realizing the concept of the common heritage of mankind while giving due regard to the particular importance of the needs and interests of developing States. The development of deep-seabed mineral resources is also of considerable importance to Japan, which depends on the import from overseas of the minerals derived from polymetallic nodules.

The Deep Ocean Resources Development Company, Japan's contractor for deep-seabed mining which was registered as a pioneer investor in 1987, has pursued a variety of activities which have extended the frontiers of seabed development. It has also provided a training course for trainees from developing countries. Moreover, in accordance with the agreement reached in the Preparatory Commission, Japan has undertaken preparatory work for the exploration of mine sites reserved for the Authority in the central region of the Pacific and submitted relevant data and other information to the Commission. Thus, Japan has made valuable contributions to the establishment of a deep-seabed mining regime. It will continue its endeavours in this regard in the future.

Japan has already notified the Secretary-General of its consent to the provisional application of the Agreement relating to the implementation of part XI, effective from the date of the Convention's entry into force, and participated in the first session of the Authority held in Jamaica. Let me reiterate the readiness Japan expressed on that occasion to discharge to the best of its ability the responsibilities entrusted to it by the international community as soon as the Authority commences its work.

Needless to say, the effective implementation of the Convention and its uniform and consistent application can be realized only when national legislation and State practice are in harmony with the relevant provisions of the Convention. Japan, for its part, has been accelerating domestic procedures with a view to ratifying the Convention and the Agreement at the earliest opportunity. This process includes adjusting existing laws and regulations and, if necessary, preparing new legislation so that Japan can fully comply with every provision of the Convention. Since the Convention covers a wide range of closely interrelated subjects, the completion of this process will require a tremendous amount of effort and entail complex procedures. My Government is nevertheless determined to make every effort to ensure that Japan's maritime legal order on the uses of the sea is fully consistent with the Convention. Recognizing the historic importance of the entry into force of the Convention and its contribution to the establishment of a stable legal order of the sea, Japan has joined the sponsor of the draft resolution before us.

In concluding my remarks today, I should like to reiterate that, as one of the leading maritime nations, Japan wholeheartedly welcomes the entry into force of the Convention. It remains steadfast in its commitment to the consolidation of a single and stable regime of the sea. I should also like to call upon my colleagues here to join forces in further strengthening cooperation to promote a stable legal order of the sea as embodied in the Convention.

Mr. Rosenne (Israel): It is over 10 years since I last had the honour of representing my country in the General Assembly, at that time also on the law of the sea. I am very privileged to be returning to this Assembly under your presidency, Sir, and to be speaking again on the same item some 12 years after the Third Conference at which you, too, were a representative.

As I look around this Hall, which I first frequented shortly after it was opened, I note the difference that has come over it. The United Nations was then largely preoccupied with the aftermath of the war during which it was founded. Issues of membership in the Organization loomed large. Decolonization had not yet been conceived as a matter of practical politics which the United Nations could take upon itself.

Why do I mention this? Because there was one issue which the international organizations started to examine as long ago as 1924, under the auspices of the League of Nations, and which the General Assembly has had continuously under consideration since 1950, as was pointed out by the representative of Fiji, Ambassador Nandan, who himself has played and is continuing to play such an important role in the restless evolution of the matter. Had the Conferences of 1930, 1958 and 1960 "succeeded", the end product could well have turned out to be a pyrrhic victory and a long-term international disaster.

The 1958 Conference was the first dealing with the law of the sea to feel the beginning of the impact of decolonization. This reached its climax in the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea with a result that may be said to reflect the very broad consensus of the entire international community. The sea and the oceans at one and the same time unite the nations of the world and separate them from one another. The seas can be used for offensive purposes and they can equally be used for defensive purposes. The cardinal feature of the Montego Bay Convention is that it essentially reflects the unifying factor of common international interest and concern in and about the seas, not the divisive one. It gives legal form and substance to the defensive and pacific functions of the oceans, not to their offensive and bellicose functions.

As is a matter of common knowledge, in 1982 Israel, to its regret, found itself obliged to vote against the adoption of the Convention. The reasons were fully explained at the time, especially during the course of the eleventh session of the Conference in 1982, in writing and orally. We also had difficulties over the formulation of the Final Act, and here I wish to place on record our appreciation of the efforts of those who assisted in finding a way to overcome those difficulties, particularly the Special Representative of the Secretary-General at the time, the late Ambassador Zuleta of Colombia, and Mr. Suy of Belgium, who was then Legal Counsel of the United Nations. I have heard expressions of surprise at the way in which that Final Act was adopted paragraph by paragraph in a formal meeting of the Conference. This is indeed a very rare occurrence in modern diplomatic conferences, and I hope that these words of mine will help in an understanding of what was involved.

The position we adopted in 1982 in relation to the Montego Bay Convention was a reflection of the general situation existing at the time. It was conditioned by two main factors which were prominent then: one concerned participation both in the Conference and in the Convention; the second related to some aspects of the provisions of the Convention regarding straits used for international navigation. To a very large extent, with the passage of time and the major turn in the general situation in the Middle East which has taken place in the interval, adequate solutions to both these sets of issues seem to have been reached.

I am therefore glad to be able to state that the Government of Israel welcomes the Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Montego Bay Convention as embodied in resolution 48/263. For reasons beyond its control the delegation of Israel was absent from that meeting of the General Assembly, and this part of my statement today indicates our position. We find that the Agreement covers all the outstanding points in Part XI which might have caused us some concern, and from a wider perspective we see it as a major step forward in the development and the consolidation of the law of the sea. We are examining the problems relating to our signing it. We hope it will achieve its object of accomplishing within as short a period as is feasible the widest possible participation in the Convention itself. We realize that the requirement of ratification set out in article 306 of the Convention may produce unexpected or unanticipated roadblocks in the way of the achievement of universal participation in the Convention. A Convention of this magnitude cannot be isolated from considerations of internal politics in the different countries, and mine is no exception.

With regard to the Convention itself — incorporating the Part XI Agreement — I am also happy to be able to state that our reservations have in large measure been met by events that have occurred since Montego Bay, and our competent authorities at home are therefore putting in hand a full review of the Convention with a view to accession to it. We are in particular impressed with the revised formulation of the law on innocent passage through the territorial sea. We had serious reservations over the changes in that aspect which were reluctantly accepted at the 1958 Conference. We find the new formulation, largely based on proposals advanced by Fiji and the United Kingdom, as later interpreted by the Jackson Hole Agreement between the United States and the then Soviet Union, more satisfactory.

I would like to say a few words on the draft resolution before us.

I think I have said enough to indicate that we are satisfied with the preambular paragraphs. They reflect in sober terms, almost in understatement, the fact that the year 1994 has witnessed the culmination of a complex diplomatic operation which — as I have mentioned — commenced as long ago as 1924 and has continued virtually without stopping since then.

With regard to operative paragraph 3, while we support that provision, we have to be mindful that it cannot override the requirement of ratification laid down in the Convention itself.

With regard to operative paragraphs 5, 6 and 11, they are justified by the unusual circumstances which have occurred since the adoption of the Convention in 1982. The amendment provisions of the Convention were given close attention when the final clauses were being negotiated, and while annex VI, article 4, paragraph 3, appears clear enough regarding the time when the first election of the members of the Law of the Sea Tribunal should take place, there are other provisions of the Convention, notably article 308, paragraph 3, which acknowledge that the Assembly of the Authority might not, at its first meeting to take place on the entry into force of the Convention, be able to elect a Council strictly in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention regarding its composition. We think that similar considerations can be applied to the actions of the States parties in relation to the election of the members of the Tribunal, especially when we have regard to annex VI, article 35, paragraph 2, on the composition of the Seabed Disputes Chamber.

More particularly with regard to operative paragraph 11, while we appreciate the need for preparations of a practical nature for the organization of the Tribunal and the establishment of its library, annex VI, article 12, deals very specifically with the Tribunal's power to appoint its Registrar and other officers and staff. Accordingly, we understand paragraph 11 as not prejudging that provision.

With regard to operative paragraphs 13 and 14, we would like to join previous delegations which have expressed their appreciation of the valuable report (A/49/631) presented this year by the Secretary-General. As we have not addressed the matter in previous discussions on the law of the sea in the General Assembly since Montego Bay, I would like to say that the whole series of reports submitted by the Secretary-General, both the general reports and the specific ones submitted from time to time at the request of the General Assembly, are both of a high standard and of the greatest value in bringing to general attention major developments, both concerning the Convention itself and in connection with ocean affairs more generally. We think that some way should be found to give these reports — all of them — a wider and, if I may say so without disrespect to the documentation services of the United Nations, a more attractive format.

With regard to the Office, now Division, for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, as one who has been actively involved since 1982, in the University of Virginia, in attempting to piece together in an accessible form the full legislative history of every provision of the Convention, I have every reason to know first-hand what valuable and willing help its personnel, of all ranks, have rendered and can render in assisting in an understanding of the provisions of the Convention, what a given provision of the Convention sets out to do, problems which those who negotiated a given article or a larger section of the Convention faced, and what compromises were accepted. No international treaty can reach the level of perfection that a draft instrument prepared by a skilled group of experts can attain. The requirement of diplomatic compromise in the nature of things leads to texts which some might find to be ambiguous and others perfectly clear — a balancing act magnified sixfold when rendered in the six official languages of the Convention. So again, I express my deep appreciation to the Division for all its valuable work.

With regard to operative paragraph 15 (f), on a small technical point, we are glad to see formalized once and for all the distinction between the formal depositary functions of the Secretary-General under the Convention and the special functions imposed on him regarding the deposit of maps and charts with the Secretary-General. That has always been our understanding of the Convention, and the clarification is appropriate.

With regard to operative paragraph 16, we understand that the relevant provisions of annexes V, VII and VIII to the Convention, regarding conciliation, arbitration and special arbitration procedures, do not impose on the Secretary-General any major administration or support functions. Our reading of the Convention is that if any link in respect of the arbitration and conciliation processes is to be established with the United Nations or, for that matter, with any other competent international body, such as a permanent court of arbitration, that is a matter for the parties. We think that this should remain so and that any link with the United Nations should be kept loose and optional, remaining within the four walls of the Convention.

We welcome the idea of an annual review of oceans affairs in the General Assembly. In fact, this has become quite normal and is encouraged by paragraph 2 (a) of article 319 of the Convention. However, I should like to take this opportunity of stating that my delegation has noted that matters relating to the sea have also been discussed in other organs of the General Assembly — notably the Second Committee. It is true that in some respects the discussions at that level related not to the law of the sea as a whole but to more specific problems arising in connection with, or out of, other agenda items already being discussed in that Committee.

We were glad to be able to be one of the sponsors, a few years ago, of the major draft resolution on drift-net fishing, and, this year, of one on the year of the ocean. We observe that the question of straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks is also being examined in the Second Committee. This is a significant issue already covered in part in the Convention. That is an important Conference, and we hope that Ambassador Nandan will be able to lead it to a successful conclusion in 1995.

At the same time, we should like to express the hope that those responsible for organizing the work of the General Assembly will keep a close watch on where matters relating to different topics and subtopics of the law of the sea are being discussed and will not allow these debates to become widely diffused throughout the General Assembly. Recognition of what operative paragraph 7 terms the "unified character of the Convention" should be reflected in the organization of the work of the General Assembly and other relevant United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies in connection with the seas. Excessive diffusion of the topic through the General Assembly and other organs could turn out to be counter-productive and could lead to unnecessary duplication of efforts, both here and in national administrations.

The Secretary-General's report (A/49/631 and Corr.1), in various places, draws attention to some of the problems that the coastal States of the Mediterranean Sea face. We have noted with satisfaction the last preambular paragraph, which refers to the need to promote and facilitate international cooperation, especially at the subregional and regional levels, in order to ensure orderly and sustainable development of the uses and resources of the seas and oceans. In that connection, we welcome the recent initiative of the European Union with regard to fisheries management in the Mediterranean Sea, and we look forward to a constructive conference in Crete next week.

Israel is a maritime nation which has always been and remains closely concerned with all questions of freedom of navigation and overflight — with freedom of communication generally. We have kept all these aspects under close review — in fact, going back to the first questionnaire of the International Law Commission on these matters in the 1950s — and we should not like our silence during the General Assembly debates since Montego Bay to be misunderstood. The routes of both our commercial shipping lines and our commercial airlines extend to enormous distances — in fact, from the eastern shores of the Pacific to its western shores.

We hope that the Convention — the product of so much inspired human energy and ingenuity — will achieve the aim that the draft resolution sets out: recognition of its fundamental importance for the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security and its universality as a means of achieving the peaceful uses of the seas and the facilitating of international communication, the efficient and equitable utilization of the living resources of the seas and the preservation of the marine environment, which is, in fact, the total environment of the planet as a whole. We hope that the examination that we are now putting in hand will enable us to accede to the Convention within a reasonable period.

Some 3,000 years ago the poet-King of Israel, David, uttered the formula for integrated control and management of the oceans and their resources. In the Book of Psalms we read:

> "How many are the things you have made, O Lord! You have made them all with wisdom, the earth is full of Your creations.
>
> "There is the sea, vast and wide, with its creatures beyond number, living things, small and great.
>
> "There go the ships and leviathan," —

the whales and the dolphins —

> "that You formed to frolic.
>
> "All of them look to You to give them food when it is due." *(The Holy Bible, Psalm 104, vv. 24-27)*

Mr. Cassar (Malta): The entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea marks a milestone in the history of this Organization. It is the culmination of the efforts and the demonstration of the will of the international community to put into effect a concept that was launched more than 25 years ago. This political will was to have far-reaching significance in the establishment of a legal order for the seas and oceans to facilitate international communication and to promote their peaceful use. Equally important, it has provided the framework for the equitable and efficient utilization of their resources, for the conservation of their living resources and for the study, protection and preservation of the marine environment.

The entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is of special significance to my delegation. It was in August 1967 that Malta's first Permanent Representative to the United Nations — Ambassador Dr. Arvid Pardo — on behalf of my Government, submitted to the Secretary-General a memorandum requesting the inclusion in the agenda of the twenty-second session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "Declaration and treaty concerning the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and of the ocean floor, underlying the seas beyond the limits of present national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind" *(A/6695)*.

The concept of the common heritage of mankind was the basic, key principle which inspired deliberations in this most important area of human activity. Revolutionary in its vision when first launched, this concept remains appealing even today. It provides an inherent link to the past as well as an intrinsic passage to the future. The common heritage of mankind today continues to evolve from a concept to a regime which helps States discern, implement and respect principles and rules governing areas of common concern in the interest of present and future generations.

The General Assembly's adoption on 28 July this year of the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea was aimed at facilitating universal participation. The Convention is an important contribution to the maintenance of peace, justice and progress for all peoples of the world. The principles and purposes of the Convention would have been severely handicapped if denied the major premise of universality. This was influential in determining the outcome of the negotiations which led to the Agreement.

Now that agreement has been reached, it is important that universality become a reality. This delegation cannot but support and emphasize the part of the draft resolution which calls upon all States that have not done so to become parties to the Convention and to the Agreement relating to the implementation of part XI of the Convention.

With the Convention's entry into force, the mandate of the Preparatory Commission has expired. We are now in the process of institution-building based on the new mandates which have come into effect. Three new international organizations — the International Seabed Authority, the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea and the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf — will be set up. It is on this process that we must now concentrate.

Much work has already been done by the Preparatory Commission, which we thank and commend. Much still needs to be done in ensuring that such organizations will be both functional and cost-effective. The draft resolution is a reflection of the will to achieve this desired, delicate balance.

The importance of the International Seabed Authority will increase as technological advances in seabed mining make exploitation of minerals more feasible. The International Tribunal provides assurance of dispute settlement and regulation, which are essential ingredients for the overall success of the workings of the Convention.

My delegation looks forward to participating in the negotiations relative to the institutionalization and evolution of these organizations, and it pledges its support to this end.

As important as institutional harmony may be for the success of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, that success will ultimately depend to a large extent on the political will and commitment of States to abide by its provisions. The international community has declared such a commitment. Early ratification of the Convention will further testify to the universal readiness to promote and give effect to its provisions.

However, the Convention does not merely provide for the institutional machinery currently being put in place; it also provides a stimulus and a basis for negotiations in other fields not sufficiently detailed in the Convention. The forthcoming Conference on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks is an example of forums in which the international community will deal with issues of great interest to a number of States.

Underpinning the concept of common heritage are universal concern and consequent action in the interest of a more secure and equitable order for present and future generations. The protection of the equal sovereignty of States and the defence of the common principles and rules of conduct regulating the international community are at the basis of the notion of security. The continued evolution and enhancement of these concepts form the fabric of norms and standards which guide lawful international behaviour.

Malta has adhered to the provisions of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. We have undertaken our obligations as a State Party and will abide by them. In doing so, we will continue to pursue those avenues which seek new grounds of international agreement regulating other important areas not sufficiently provided for in the Convention.

Mr. Rowe (Australia): My delegation is pleased to co-sponsor and support the draft resolution on the law of the sea, contained in document A/49/L.47.

The year 1994 will surely be regarded by future generations as a major milestone in the history of the law of the sea. The developments that have taken place this year are historic and represent the achievement of a common goal towards which so many have worked over the course of the last generation. These developments include the adoption by the General Assembly of the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which resolved the outstanding differences on the deep-seabed-mining regime; the inaugural meeting of the International Seabed Authority in Kingston, Jamaica; and the first meeting of States Parties to the Convention, at which Parties decided in favour of a one-off deferment of the establishment of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea until 1 August 1996. In addition, and most significantly, the Convention itself entered into force on 16 November 1994.

Australia's primary goal during the lengthy negotiations on the law of the sea has been to achieve a widely accepted and comprehensive Convention to deal with all the ways in which humanity interacts with the seas and oceans. The Convention provides a comprehensive legal order for the seas and oceans. It articulates a code of legal principles covering such diverse issues as navigation, marine resource management, mining of the deep seabed and dispute resolution. Hence, it must be considered not only one of the most important legal regimes in history, but also one of the major achievements in treaty making and multilateral cooperation. In welcoming the Convention's entry into force, we consider it appropriate to recognize the crucial role the United Nations has played in the negotiation of the Convention.

Australia is proud to have played a role in the negotiation of the Convention and of the implementing Agreement, which was adopted by the General Assembly, with overwhelming support on 28 July this year. The Agreement, by resolving all outstanding differences on the deep-seabed-mining regime, has paved the way for universal participation in the Convention. Our commitment to the package of the Convention and the implementing Agreement is demonstrated by the Australian Government's decision to ratify the Convention. Australia's Foreign Minister, Senator Gareth Evans, conveyed our instrument of ratification to the Secretary-General on 5 October 1994, thereby ensuring that Australia was an original Party to the Convention when it entered into force.

The entry into force of the Convention is more than the achievement of a goal towards which so many have worked. It is also the beginning of a new and important phase of the law of the sea, a phase which offers so much to all of us, not only in terms of resource security and development but also in terms of increased cooperation and certainty, based on the rule of law.

Australia welcomed the inaugural meeting of the International Seabed Authority, a symbolic beginning of this new phase, and we look forward to working with other States to ensure the operational success of the Authority and of its subsidiary organs. As we have previously stressed, the Authority, if it is to sustain international credibility, must operate on, *inter alia*, the principle of cost effectiveness, a requirement reflected in the terms of the implementing Agreement and of the current draft resolution.

Australia supported the decision by the first meeting of States parties to the Convention, which was held in New York on 21 and 22 November of this year, to defer the establishment of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea until 1 August 1996 so as to allow States which had not yet ratified the Convention a reasonable time to complete their ratification procedures. Australia considers that the Convention's innovative and flexible dispute-settlement provisions will play a vital role in ensuring consistent implementation of the Convention's provisions and in creating a body of international law which will interpret those provisions in a uniform manner. We also believe that the Tribunal will play a central role in the dispute-settlement process. The one-off deferment will, however, ensure a more equitable representation of judges from different legal systems and geographic groups and will allow the Tribunal to operate from a broader legal and financial base. For these reasons, the one-off deferment cannot but strengthen the base from which the Tribunal will commence its functioning and enhance its international legal stature. We look forward to beginning work towards the establishment of such an effective and efficient Tribunal at the next meeting of States parties to be held from 15 to 19 May 1995.

Australia recognizes the long-standing contribution of the United Nations in law-of-the-sea matters and the continuing contribution it will make.

Australia would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General — appreciation is also reflected in the terms of the current draft resolution — for the work carried out by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea in the lead-up to and immediately following the entry into force of the Convention. However, we consider that the Division's job has only just begun. Australia believes that in this new phase of the law of the sea the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea will play an important role as the central body with responsibility for, *inter alia*, compiling information on implementation of the Convention, responding to requests from States and competent international organizations and preparing specific reports. While we recognize that other institutions created by the Convention will also have a role in providing information on specific areas within their competence, it will be crucial for the Division to continue to consolidate its role as a focal point for the preparation of material and meetings relating to the Convention as a whole.

The Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the Convention, which provides for a system of provisional membership, and the decision of the first meeting of States parties for a one-off deferment of the Tribunal to allow States not yet parties to complete their ratification procedures, as well as the statements by delegations at the inaugural meeting of the Authority, have all demonstrated a genuine spirit of cooperation and a concrete desire to work together towards universal participation in the Convention.

Australia believes strongly that universal participation in the Convention is the best means of achieving long-term order and stability in the world's oceans. By way of conclusion, therefore, we would once again urge all States that have not yet ratified the Convention to increase their efforts to do so as soon as possible.

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine): This year, 1994, is of special importance to the law of the sea. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea entered into force on 16 November 1994, and on that very day the International Seabed Authority was established and the first session of its Assembly began its work.

All this would not have been possible without the adoption of the Agreement relating to the Implementation of Part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. That crucial Agreement was adopted on 28 July 1994. I am glad to announce that Ukraine is about to sign the Agreement. It is to be hoped that by the end of 1995 Ukraine will complete the necessary parliamentary procedures and ratify the Convention.

We have travelled a lengthy path together through thousands of hours of negotiations to reach today's compromise. The journey began in 1967. However, after our long trek, we have now reached a point from where we must now set out on yet another long journey. We must now make the Convention work for the benefit of all nations — large and small, developing and developed, coastal and land-locked.

Ukraine has always viewed the Convention not only as a charter for the oceans but as a comprehensive system of economic and political cooperation in marine-related matters as well. In other words, we have now arrived at a starting point, at the beginning of the implementation of the Convention and its practical use.

I should like to read out the following very important sentence from the Secretary-General's report:

> "At this important juncture in the historic treaty-making process, the Secretary-General stands ready to extend, using all resources at his disposal, whatever assistance Governments may need in accepting and implementing the Convention." *(A/49/631, para. 3)*

We welcome that statement by the Secretary-General. What is needed now is the concrete programme that will allow for the use of the benefits to be derived under the Convention.

The United Nations has a crucial role to play in the global implementation of the Convention. The Secretary-General is entrusted with special responsibilities under the Convention. These are specified in, *inter alia*, paragraph 15 of draft resolution A/49/L.47. That paragraph is a good basis for the future elaboration of more detailed approaches. In this context, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs acquires a new and much more important dimension.

Mr. Mwaungulu (Malawi), Vice-President, took the Chair.

But this is not enough. We view the role of the United Nations on the law of the sea in a much broader sense. We have in mind the development of a specific infrastructure allowing for the provision of marine-related assistance and services at the multilateral level by those who have the capacity to those who need this assistance. This is important for both developing and developed countries, and especially so for countries in transition. Ukraine, for example, has a substantial scientific research fleet which can be used for many types of marine scientific research. We are ready to provide assistance in this field. Ukraine also has a number of shipyards capable of constructing different types of ships, even up to and including those the size of aircraft carriers. These are but two examples.

Of course, we are developing bilateral relations in order to utilize this potential to the fullest extent. But this is not enough. I want to emphasize again that we need an infrastructure for such cooperation at the level of the United Nations.

Ukraine participated as an observer at the meeting of States parties to the Convention concerning the establishment of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, which was held in New York from 21 to 22 November 1994. We welcome the decision adopted by the meeting to hold the election of the members of the Tribunal on 1 August 1996. We would like to emphasize the importance of paragraph 5 of the decision stating, *inter alia*, that

> "all procedures relating to the election of the members of the Tribunal as provided for in the Convention shall apply".

This provision is especially important with respect to the membership of the Tribunal. I wish to quote paragraph 2 of article 3 of annex VI of the Convention, which contains the Statute of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. It states:

> "There shall be no fewer than three members from each geographical group as established by the General Assembly of the United Nations."

Since the adoption of the Convention, Ukraine has provided constant and active support for the efforts to consolidate the legal order governing the seas and oceans. In its legislative practices, Ukraine has followed the letter and the spirit of the Convention very closely. For example, the recently adopted law of Ukraine on the State frontier of Ukraine was drafted in strict conformity with the provisions of Part II of the Convention regarding, *inter alia*, the 12-nautical-mile breadth of the territorial sea, the right of innocent passage throughout the territorial sea, baselines, the definition of internal waters and the procedures governing the entry of foreign non-military vessels and warships into the internal waters and ports of Ukraine.

Ukraine is continuing the process of reviewing its national legislation with a view to bringing it into full conformity with the Convention.

In conclusion, I would like to point out that, as in previous years, Ukraine is one of the sponsors of the draft resolution on the law of the sea. We hope that the General Assembly will adopt it by consensus.

Ms. Wilmshurst (United Kingdom): The representative of Germany has already made a statement on behalf of the European Union, and the United Kingdom associates itself fully with it.

As a nation with a long maritime history and wide-ranging maritime interests, the United Kingdom has particular pleasure in seeing the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea come into force with the real prospect of universal application. The United Kingdom has announced its intention to accede to the Convention and has signed and is provisionally applying the Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention. We attended the inaugural meeting of the International Seabed Authority in Kingston last month, and we shall be attending the first substantive meeting in February and March of 1995. We look forward to continued cooperation with those countries from all parts of the world that share our desire for the universal application of the Convention and the entry into force of the Agreement relating to the implementation of Part XI.

My delegation is most grateful to Ambassador Nandan of Fiji for his role in the preparation of draft resolution A/49/L.47, which the United Kingdom is very glad to co-sponsor, and for his lucid introduction of the draft resolution this morning.

The United Kingdom shares the concern expressed in the draft resolution that all States should implement the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in a consistent manner. My delegation welcomes the reference in operative paragraph 21 of the resolution to the Hamilton Shirley Amerasinghe Memorial Fellowship. That Fellowship has the capacity to play an important part in assisting in the effective and consistent application of the provisions of the Convention by providing educational opportunities for those involved in the law of the sea. The Fellowship provides for chosen Fellows to pursue postgraduate-level research and training in the field of the law of the sea, in its implementation and in related marine affairs. But the Fellowship is short of funds. It is not, at present, able to take advantage of all of the offers it has received from universities and other institutions for courses in the law of the sea. Paragraph 21 of the resolution invites States to contribute to the Fellowship and my delegation is pleased to announce that the United Kingdom intends to commit funds to the Fellowship sufficient for a student from a developing country to take a year's course in the law of the sea at a United Kingdom university.

Mr. Neil (Jamaica): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the 12 States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and on behalf of Suriname.

The international community has witnessed significant developments during this year in the area of the law of the sea. In July, after a lengthy period of negotiations, the General Assembly adopted the Agreement relating to the implementation of part XI of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 (resolution 48/263, annex); this has brought to an end much of the uncertainty over the future of the Convention. The Convention's entry into force on 16 November 1994 was a historically significant milestone marked by the holding of the inaugural meeting of the International Seabed Authority in Kingston, Jamaica, from 16 to 18 November. We must also welcome the holding, in November, of the first meeting of States parties, which concentrated on arrangements for the establishment of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea.

The next stage, and the main challenge before us, is to ensure that the Convention is effectively implemented and that the institutional arrangements elaborated in it are laid on a firm foundation and are given the support and resources to perform their functions effectively.

The Caribbean States and Suriname, for reasons of geography and history, have always had a special interest in, and have given full support to, the Convention on the Law of the Sea as the mechanism for addressing ocean-related issues and providing the foundation for building international cooperation. It not only defines the terms of that cooperation and serves to enhance coordination and promote coherence of action, but also provides a universal legal framework for rationally managing marine resources and an agreed set of principles to guide consideration of the numerous issues and challenges that will continue to arise. From navigation and overflights to resource exploration and exploitation, conservation and pollution, fishing and shipping, the Convention provides a focal point for international deliberation and action.

Despite the overwhelming support for the Convention, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the Convention, which is designed for mankind as a whole, must secure the universal participation of all mankind. Our continued search for universality has in the past four years centred around a dialogue under the auspices of the Secretary-General aimed at addressing issues of concern to some States which found difficulties with certain aspects of part XI of the Convention. That search for universality has always recognized that the integrity of the Convention as a whole must be maintained and that the tremendous political, economic and social changes within the international community have in no way invalidated the fundamental basis of the Convention: the principles of the common heritage of mankind on which part XI of the Convention is based. It is a matter of great importance that the negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General have culminated in the Agreement relating to the implementation of part XI of the Convention.

The CARICOM States and Suriname welcome and support the implementation Agreement because it provides an opportunity to secure true universality in the application of the Convention and devises mechanisms for securing such universality, even in advance of ratification, by allowing for provisional application of part XI of the Convention. We regard it as specially important that all States that have not yet done so should ratify or accede to the Convention in the coming months so as to ensure the fullest support for the arrangements to implement the provisions of the Convention.

With regard to the International Seabed Authority, which is an autonomous institution created under the Convention, we have accepted that the evolutionary approach adopted in the implementation of the regime for the common-heritage Area recognizes the need for a cost-effective institution which takes into account the functional needs of the organs and subsidiary bodies of the Authority to discharge effectively their respective responsibilities at various stages of the development of activities in the seabed.

As far as the financial arrangements are concerned, it is our confident expectation that paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 48/263 will be smoothly implemented, fully taking into account the decisions and recommendations of the Preparatory Commission for the International Seabed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. We wish to stress that the financial provisions should be made on the basis that the Authority will have control of its own budget, as stipulated in the Agreement.

We feel proud that Jamaica, a member of the Caribbean subregion, will be the host country for the International Seabed Authority. This is also unique because, for the first time, a small island developing State enjoys the singular honour of being endorsed as the headquarters of a body intended to serve the entire international community. The recent inaugural session of the Authority was of historic significance. It not only celebrated the entry into force of the Convention, but also served to confirm the fundamental role of the United Nations in finding solutions to questions of universal concern and to confirm that the principles of the common heritage of mankind on which part XI of the Convention is based must continue to serve for all time.

The entry into force of the Convention also brings Member States new obligations and opportunities arising from the extension of jurisdiction, the opening of new fields of activity, and increased uses of the oceans. States are called upon to apply the new provisions in accordance with the spirit of the Convention, to harmonize national legislation with it and to fulfil their obligations under the Convention. Another major challenge for the international community will be the provision of the necessary assistance, particularly to developing States, in order to allow them to benefit from the rights they have acquired under the new regime. It is our hope that the Convention will become an engine of cooperation between developed and developing States in this regard.

The entry into force of the Convention triggers a series of actions to be taken by the Secretary-General in the near future, such as the convening of the second part of the first session of the International Seabed Authority,[1] to be held from 27 February to 17 March 1995 in Jamaica, the meeting of States parties to the Convention to elect members of the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf, and the meeting of States parties relating to the organization of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, to be held in New York in May 1995. We are confident that the Secretary-General will effectively execute his obligations under the Convention, resolutions of the General Assembly and decisions of the Preparatory Commission for the International Seabed Authority and for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. We look forward to full participation in these meetings in order to further the realization of the purposes and objectives of the Convention.

We are now at the beginning of a new phase with a host of new challenges to face. It is therefore vital that we act together to ensure that all the arrangements to implement the provisions of the Convention are made on the basis of a joint and united effort. In this spirit, Jamaica has joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/49/L.47; in our view, it would be entirely appropriate for the General Assembly to adopt it by consensus.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/49/L.47.

Several representatives wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting. May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Illueca (Panama) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: The delegation of Panama wishes to state that it will vote in favour of the draft resolution on the law of the sea contained in document A/49/L.47.

Located as it is on an inter-ocean canal, my country shares this Assembly's concern that we should recognize the universal nature of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and the establishment, under it, of a legal regime that will facilitate international communication and promote the peaceful uses of the seas and oceans.

The report of the Secretary-General in document A/49/631, submitted to the General Assembly pursuant to resolution 48/28, is an excellent contribution to the attainment of this goal and therefore deserves our warmest appreciation. The report, issued on 16 November 1994, the date of the entry into force of the Convention, contains important information as a basis for establishing criteria that will help to ensure the universality of the Convention and to promote cooperation and coordination in respect of marine affairs within the United Nations system.

On instructions from my Foreign Ministry, I am very pleased to announce formally to the Assembly that the Government of Panama intends to submit the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, of 10 December 1982, to the National Assembly for approval in accordance with the procedure established under our Constitution with a view to its ratification.

Accordingly, the delegation of Panama will vote in favour of draft resolution A/49/L.47.

Mr. Bayar (Turkey): Turkey will vote against the resolution on the law of the sea contained in document A/49/L.47.

The reason for my delegation's negative vote is that some of the elements contained in the Convention on the Law of the Sea which had prevented Turkey from approving the Convention are still being retained in the resolution. Turkey supports international efforts to establish a regime of the sea which is based on the principle of equity and which can be acceptable to all States. However, the Convention does not make adequate provision for special geographical situations and, as a consequence, is not able to establish a satisfactory balance between conflicting interests.

Furthermore, the Convention makes no provision for registering reservations on specific clauses. Although we agree with the general intent and most of the provisions of the Convention, we were unable to sign it owing to these serious shortcomings.

This being the case, therefore, we cannot accept the provision in the resolution which requires States to conform with the Convention on the Law of the Sea in drafting their national legislations.

Mr. Tarev (Russian Federation) *(interpretation from Russian):* The delegation of the Russian Federation will abstain in the vote on draft resolution A/49/L.47, on the law of the sea, for the following reasons.

Russia welcomes the entry into force of the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. We believe that this will promote and enhance the level of cooperation among States with regard to the world's oceans and represents an important step in the cause of strengthening law and order on the seas. Strict compliance with the provisions of the Convention by all States is an indispensable precondition for harmonious cooperation in this area.

The Agreement on the Implementation of Part XI of the Convention, prepared at the consultations under the aegis of the Secretary-General and adopted on 28 July 1994, to a significant degree helps resolve the problem of the universality of the Convention by creating the needed bases towards this end.

At the same time, the Agreement bears the traces of a compromise on many issues which are important to Russia. In particular, the provisions concerning the financial aspects of the activities of the International Seabed Authority are not formulated in a sufficiently precise manner and are open to various interpretations.

Unfortunately, the tendency towards unjustified expenditures was already apparent on 16 November 1994, as was noted by the members of the Committee on International Affairs of the State Duma of Russia at its meeting on 21 November 1994. Russia's attitude to the Convention and to the Agreement will be determined by the extent to which there will be consistent implementation of the Agreement concerning the establishment and activity of the International Seabed Authority and, in particular, the regime for economizing on means and expenditures.

While recognizing the importance of these documents we do not at the present time see a sufficient basis for unconditional support of the draft resolution on the law of the sea.

The President: We shall now take a decision on draft resolution A/49/L.47.

In this connection I wish to announce that the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/49/L.47: Barbados, Bahamas, Belize, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Cuba, Ghana, Philippines, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago and Ukraine.

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Perfiliev (Director, General Assembly Affairs Division): Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/49/L.47, it would by paragraphs 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22 and 23 of the draft resolution request the Secretary-General to undertake a number of activities.

Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would undertake the activities outlined therein.

With regard to the request contained in operative paragraph 9 of the draft resolution to, *inter alia*, implement the decision of the General Assembly contained in paragraph 8 of its resolution 48/263, taking into account the decisions and recommendations of the Preparatory Commission, related estimates of additional-resource requirements have been submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/C.5/49/25.

With regard to operative paragraph 11 of the draft resolution, it had been decided that the States parties to the Convention would hold one session in 1995, with the possibility of holding another session in the same year. Each session would last a week. The first session would be held from 15 to 19 May 1995, with four meetings a day, two in the morning and two in the afternoon. It has been proposed that the second session take place from 21 to 25 August 1995, subject to confirmation by the States parties. There would be four meetings a day, two in the morning and two in the afternoon.

Interpretation and documentation services in all six official languages would be provided for the meetings. No summary records would be required. It is assumed that the conference servicing requirements for these meetings would be met from within resources programmed under subsection 25 (e), Office of Conference and Support Services, of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995. Accordingly, no additional requirements for conference servicing would arise.

With regard to the other activities mentioned in operative paragraphs 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 22 and 23 of the draft resolution, while additional resource requirements would arise, the entry into force of the Convention and the consequent discontinuation of a number of activities anticipated in the programme budget for 1994-1995, it would be possible to absorb these additional resource requirements within the initial appropriations authorized under section 7 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

With regard to the additional activity mentioned in operative paragraph 22 of the draft resolution, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution the Secretary-General would, as requested, prepare a programme, the resource requirements of which in 1996-1997 would be kept within the levels of resources approved under section 7 of the programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995.

The President: We shall now begin the voting procedure. I put to the vote draft resolution A/49/L.47. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Turkey

Abstaining:

Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Peru, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Thailand, Venezuela

Draft resolution A/49/L.47 was adopted by 130 votes to 1, with 7 abstentions (resolution 49/28).

The President: We shall now hear those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and 5 minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Zhang Kening (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The representative of Viet Nam, in his statement this morning, mentioned the territorial disputes between China and Viet Nam over the South China Sea. He also said that certain foreign petroleum companies are cooperating in exploring in that area and that this had caused the disputes between the two countries.

China would like to reiterate the principled position of the Chinese Government.

First, China has indisputable sovereignty over the Xisha and Nansha Islands and the maritime area adjacent to them.

Secondly, Wanantan is part of the Nansha Islands, and I repeat that China has indisputable sovereignty over the Xisha and Nansha Islands and the maritime area adjacent to them. This is based on international law and history. Viet Nam is engaging in research activities in this area, thereby seriously infringing upon the sovereignty of China over the Nansha Islands and its maritime interests.

Thirdly, as regards the territorial question of the boundary between China and Viet Nam, both sides agreed to find a solution through negotiation. China has consistently held that we should try to find a solution to the dispute over the Nansha Islands. We advocate setting the dispute aside and jointly exploring in the area.

In his statement this morning, the representative of Viet Nam made comments that were not based in fact. The Chinese delegation therefore had to express its regret and clarify its position. The Chinese delegation requests the Secretariat of the United Nations to place our statement on record.

Mr. Nguyen Duy Chien (Viet Nam): Our delegation does not intend to raise the question of the disputes in the Eastern Sea during this debate. We should like only to supply further information with regard to paragraph 55 of the Secretary-General's report in document A/49/631.

Our position was clearly expressed in the statement made by my Ambassador this morning. However, some remarks have been made questioning the sovereignty of Viet Nam over its two archipelagos, Hoang Sa and Truong Sa. We therefore wish to add that Viet Nam's sovereignty over Hoang Sa (Paracel) Islands and Truong Sa (Spratly) Islands is indisputable.

We should like to reiterate our hope that the parties concerned, while making active efforts to promote negotiations towards a fundamental and long-term solution, will maintain stability on the basis of the status quo and refrain from any act that can further complicate the situation and, refrain from the use of force or the threat of force.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 35?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.

United Nations

A/49/PV.79

General Assembly

Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

79th Meeting
Wednesday, 7 December 1994, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

Agenda item 26

Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States: report of the Secretary-General (A/49/419)

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that the General Assembly takes note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/419)?

It was so decided.

The President (*interpretation from French*): The first speaker is the Prime Minister of Latvia.

Mr. Maris Gailis, Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I now call upon the Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia.

Mr. Gailis (Latvia): On behalf of Estonia, Lithuania and my own country, Latvia, I have the honour to address the United Nations General Assembly on the agenda item entitled "Complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States".

Following the restoration of independence, a singular priority for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was the withdrawal of foreign military forces from their territories. Today, we pay tribute to the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as to the individual States that played a vital role in achieving this end.

In resolutions 47/21 and 48/18, the General Assembly called for the conclusion of bilateral agreements providing for the early, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of Estonia and Latvia. The adoption of those resolutions raised, from the regional to the global level, the commitment reached by the participating States of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in paragraph 15 of the 1992 Helsinki Document.

I have the pleasure to report on the implementation of resolutions 47/21 and 48/18, as well as of paragraph 15 of the CSCE Helsinki Document. In September 1992, the Defence Ministers of Lithuania and the Russian Federation signed agreements providing for the complete withdrawal of Russian military forces from Lithuania by 31 August 1993. It was nearly two years later when the President of Latvia and the President of Estonia, on 30 April 1994 and 26 July 1994, respectively, signed bilateral agreements with the President of the Russian Federation providing for the complete withdrawal of Russian military forces from Latvia and Estonia by 31 August 1994. On the whole, pursuant to the agreements signed among the parties, the Russian Federation military

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forces were withdrawn from Lithuania by 31 August 1993 and from Estonia and Latvia by 31 August 1994.

That withdrawal is an event of historic significance for the Baltic States, the Russian Federation and Europe. For Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, it brings to an end one of the consequences of the Second World War. For the Russian Federation, it is a milestone on the path towards democratization and a repudiation of an odious part of the Soviet Union's legacy. For Europe, it means increased security and new opportunities for cooperation and integration. For the international community as a whole, the withdrawal of Russian military forces from the Baltic States is a positive contribution to the maintenance of regional and international peace and security.

The withdrawal represents a welcome reduction of military forces in the Baltic Sea region. A further reduction of military forces in the region is a desirable and achievable goal and would be conducive to the enhancement of stability and security in the entire Baltic Sea area.

The agreements reached among the parties, which were made possible by continued efforts and a readiness to compromise, contribute to the European Union's initiative for a pact on stability. The withdrawal affirms the supremacy of the rule of law, sovereign equality and the principle that military forces may not be stationed on the territory of another State without its consent. Moreover, the withdrawal takes an initial step towards remedying the consequences of a breach of international law, namely, the secret protocols to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 23 August 1939, by which Europe was divided into spheres of influence.

The withdrawal is a significant step towards the establishment of good-neighbourly relations between the Baltic States and the Russian Federation. Normalization of relations will open the way to cooperation in many areas. Improved trade between the countries, particularly the elimination of discriminatory tariffs, is a logical next step towards normalization of relations and would be in conformity with the principle of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the World Trade Organization.

Our bilateral negotiations were concluded successfully with the active involvement of the international community. The complementary roles of the United Nations and the CSCE, in particular, lent transparency to the negotiating process. The efforts of international organizations and of individual States in bringing about the resolution of this issue constitute a shining example of preventive diplomacy.

We express our gratitude to those States and organizations that have been able to provide political support and financial resources for the implementation of the agreements and for the multilateral efforts to help the Russian Federation build the needed housing for troops and their families returning from the Baltic States.

We thank the Secretary-General of the United Nations for his use of good offices in the past, including the work of his Special Envoy, and we welcome his readiness to provide good offices in the future to facilitate, if necessary, the full implementation of the agreements.

We consider the strict implementation of the agreements to be of paramount importance. Although the withdrawal of active military units has been implemented, there remain agreements that require monitoring and continued cooperation by all sides, as well as the involvement of the international community, until the conclusion of this century.

I refer, in particular, to the Latvian-Russian agreement providing for the temporary functioning of an anti-ballistic missile early-warning radar station in Skrunda, Latvia, until 31 August 1998 and its dismantlement no later than 29 February 2000. The Skrunda agreement is an inalienable part of the withdrawal agreement between Latvia and the Russian Federation. According to the agreement, the Skrunda radar station is a Russian military establishment under civilian control — nothing in the agreement shall be considered as giving the radar station the status of a military base.

Pursuant to article 18 of the Skrunda agreement, the Russian Federation has deposited a document with the United Nations Security Council which affirms the guarantees of the Russian Federation that the agreement will not be exploited for activities directed against the sovereignty and security interests of Latvia. The Skrunda agreement further provides that any attempt to settle disputes or differences of opinion connected with the agreement by means of military threats or by the use of armed force shall be considered a threat to international peace and security and, in accordance with Article 39 of the Charter of the United Nations, shall be brought before the Security Council.

I have the honour to announce that the parliaments of Latvia and the Russian Federation have recently ratified the package of agreements concluded; these agreements will shortly be registered with the Secretariat of the United Nations. I also wish to thank those Governments which have made significant material contributions towards the implementation of the Skrunda agreement.

The Estonian-Russian agreement on the former Soviet naval base at Paldiski, Estonia, provides for the dismantlement of two nuclear reactors by the Russian Federation by 30 September 1995. From the progress reported to date, we are convinced that the Russian Federation will complete the task by the designated date. We are grateful for the international effort to mitigate some of the environmental effects associated with the Paldiski nuclear reactors.

Significant progress has been achieved with the signing of agreements between Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and the Russian Federation respectively. Unfortunately, outstanding issues related to the former presence of foreign military forces remain to be resolved. We hope to continue building good cooperative relations with the Russian Federation and strive for the solution of these outstanding issues in a spirit of dialogue and mutual understanding.

A principal concern for Estonia and Latvia is that several thousand active-duty Russian Federation military personnel were demobilized or retired in the territories of Estonia and Latvia prior to 31 August 1994, in violation of the withdrawal agreements, and remain there today. These personnel, many of whom wish to return to the Russian Federation but have been abandoned by the Russian authorities, were, under the agreements, to have been withdrawn to the Russian Federation. The Russian authorities have stated that these former military personnel will be withdrawn from Latvia by the end of this year. It is our hope that this will in fact occur, and we reaffirm our readiness to cooperate on the resolution of this issue.

Greater cooperation is needed regarding the question of military transit through the territory of Lithuania. On 3 October 1994 the Government of Lithuania adopted national rules, to be applied universally and uniformly, to regulate the orderly and safe transport through Lithuanian territory of foreign military and hazardous materials. The Baltic States stress that military transit must be conducted in full compliance with existing national regulations and in accordance with international law. The Baltic States urge all States to respect and adhere to these requirements.

The Governments of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are deeply concerned about the significant environmental damage in our countries, following more than 50 years of unchecked foreign military activity. Priority areas in need of remedial action are fuel-contaminated soil and groundwater, and chemical and radioactive waste sites. We encourage all concerned parties to assist the mitigation of the damage left behind by the foreign military forces.

We are optimistic that through international cooperation we shall achieve the implementation of all the agreements concluded between our countries and the Russian Federation and resolve the outstanding issues. At the same time, we emphasize that the development of the security situation in the Baltic region should continue to receive the attention of the international community.

Yesterday, at the conclusion of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) summit in Budapest a declaration on Baltic issues was adopted and the 52 participating States of the CSCE have at the highest level confirmed again the readiness of the CSCE to participate in the monitoring of the implementation of the Latvian-Russian agreements. This ensures that in the near future the CSCE will complete the formulation of an effective inspection regime regarding the control of the operation of the Skrunda radar station.

The withdrawal of foreign military forces from our countries will enhance the consolidation of our restored democracies and accelerate the rebuilding of our economies. These in turn will enable us to increase participation in such multilateral cooperative efforts as social development, disarmament, democratic institution-building and environment. Most importantly, we believe that a new era of fruitful and constructive cooperation with all of our neighbours is now a reality for our countries.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I thank Mr. Maris Gailis, Prime Minister of Latvia, for his statement on behalf of the Baltic States.

Mr. Maris Gailis, Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): By 31 August 1994, the Russian Federation had concluded its complete and orderly withdrawal of troops from the territories of the Baltic States. Thereby, it had scrupulously complied with

United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/18 and its international commitments and graphically demonstrated its commitment to the principles of equality, respect for sovereignty and independence in its relations with the new independent States.

What is important is that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/18, after complex and protracted negotiations, agreement was reached on a package of agreements with Latvia and Estonia, regulating various aspects of the process of troop withdrawal and taking account of the interests of each of the parties. The Russian Federation views these documents as an important contribution to the consolidation of security and stability in the region and in Europe as a whole. These documents have demonstrated that Russia and its Baltic partners can find solutions to the most complex problems we inherited from the past, reach compromises and move closer together.

With the completion of the troop withdrawals, we have turned a new page in our relations with the Baltic States. That page of the past has been turned once and for all, which enables us to shift our focus to humanitarian, trade and economic issues. Hence, the question of Russian troops on the territory of the Baltic States has been completely exhausted, and we can take pleasure in removing this item from the agenda of the General Assembly.

As the Assembly knows, the Russian Federation, in a demonstration of good will and of its desire to comply with the wishes of the Baltic States, began to withdraw its troops from those countries virtually immediately upon its assumption of command over the units of the armed forces of the former USSR deployed on their territories, without waiting for the signing of the relevant agreements. The scope and size of this unprecedented operation are borne out by the following figures: between March 1992 and August 1994, more than 100,000 military personnel were redeployed from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to Russia; some 30,000 families of military personnel, totalling approximately 105,000 individuals, also left; 41,500 pieces of equipment and some 700,000 tonnes of supplies were withdrawn; and 230 ships departed from Baltic ports. It is not hard to imagine the enormous cost and organizational effort that this required on the part of Russia. Moreover, we must build thousands of apartments in Russia for the families of military personnel withdrawn from the Baltic countries.

The achievement of agreements between Russia and the Baltic countries on a range of issues relating to the withdrawal of troops was greatly assisted by the United Nations, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and other international organizations, to which we express our thanks. We also thank the States that have made and continue to make specific contributions towards integrating Russian military personnel transferred out of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Russia recently ratified a package of military agreements with Latvia, and we are engaged in the process of submitting similar agreements with Estonia to the State Duma for ratification. The Russian side continues conscientiously to implement all the obligations it has assumed. We are ready to consider problems through bilateral commissions as provided for in those agreements. Such bodies have already been established with Latvia.

The Russian Federation attaches great importance to CSCE participation in the implementation of our agreements with Estonia and Latvia; this would guarantee full compliance by the parties with their obligations. We are ready to cooperate constructively with all parties concerned in formulating the appropriate mandates.

Russia is prepared to develop relations with the Baltic States in all areas, including those mentioned this morning by the Prime Minister of Latvia and those unrelated to the question of the withdrawal of troops.

We hope that the conclusion of the military aspect of our relations with the Baltic countries will make it possible to consider in greater depth another of the region's problems which is a matter of concern and which has been the focus of attention by the United Nations and other international organizations: the situation of human rights in the Baltic countries. We believe that genuine progress can be achieved in this area too. Here, the initiative lies primarily with the Baltic States and the international community. We are pleased that our Baltic neighbours have expressed a willingness to engage in bilateral dialogue with Russia to seek a speedy solution to these problems related to the future of individuals in the region.

Mr. Graf zu Rantzau (Germany): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and Austria.

In the work of the General Assembly, happy endings are rare occasions. The withdrawal on 31 August of this year of the last military units of the Russian Federation from Estonia and Latvia falls squarely into that category. It was an event of great significance for the countries involved as well as for the entire region and, as such, fully deserves this Assembly's attention. The European Union commends the positive attitude displayed by Estonia, Latvia and the Russian Federation, without which this outcome would not have been possible.

It is worth recalling that when the Assembly first dealt with this agenda item, two years ago, Russian military forces were still stationed in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Their presence in those countries was a legacy of the former Soviet Union. While that presence was unacceptable for the Baltic countries, the withdrawal of the troops represented in many ways a difficult task for the Russian Federation.

Negotiations on withdrawal began early in 1992. At the Helsinki summit of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in July of that year, Heads of State and Government called on the States concerned to conclude, without delay, appropriate bilateral agreements, including timetables, for the early, orderly and complete withdrawal of foreign troops from the territories of the Baltic States.

The Helsinki Declaration, in turn, represented the point of reference for this Assembly when at its forty-seventh session, it first pronounced itself on the question of troop withdrawal from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. In resolution 47/21, and subsequently in resolution 48/18, the General Assembly in effect restated the essence of the Helsinki Declaration on this point. The Assembly also urged the Secretary-General to use his good offices to facilitate the withdrawal process. In the event, the Secretary-General played an important role in achieving the completion of the withdrawal process. We salute the efforts of the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, Ambassador Koh, as well as those of the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Mr. Goulding, described in the Secretary-General's most recent report, dated 22 September.

The European Union notes that agreements have also been signed regarding the radar station in Skrunda, Latvia, and the nuclear facilities in Paldiski, Estonia. Further agreements have been concluded on social guarantees for retired military personnel of the Russian Federation living in those two countries. The European Union proceeds from the assumption that these agreements will be fully implemented. It welcomes the assurances given by the Russian Federation with regard to Skrunda, and hopes that an appropriate monitoring regime will be agreed upon shortly.

The European Union believes that the withdrawal of Russian armed forces from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania opens the way for increased cooperation between the Baltic States and the Russian Federation. We consider this step as a vital contribution to security and stability in the Baltic region as well as in the whole of Europe.

The European Union hopes that all countries involved will build upon this achievement and strive for the solution of remaining issues in a spirit of dialogue and mutual understanding. In a situation in which the European Union is developing increasingly close ties with both the Baltic States and the Russian Federation, it has an important stake in the further improvement of Baltic-Russian relations.

Mr. Haakonsen (Denmark): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark.

The completion of the withdrawal of foreign troops from the Baltic States on 31 August 1994 marks a significant step towards security and stability in the Baltic region as well as in the northern European region as a whole.

The Nordic countries are very pleased to join the Secretary-General in commending all the parties concerned for their success in resolving the problems related to the presence of foreign armed forces in the territory of the Baltic States.

The agreements on troop withdrawal provided for a longer period for the dismantling and decommissioning of the Skrunda Radar and the Paldiski facilities. The Nordic countries welcome these agreements, as well as the agreements on social guarantees for retired military personnel and members of their families in Latvia and Estonia. The Nordic countries feel confident that the parties will continue to address all issues of concern in a spirit of cooperation.

Today, the Baltic region has re-emerged as a region with its own interests and opportunities. Through centuries, the region was characterized by extensive political, economic and cultural links. These links are being re-established and are developing with remarkable momentum.

To the Nordic countries, this development is of special significance. We have an obvious interest not only in all efforts aimed at enhancing security and stability but also in the promotion of economic and cultural links in the Baltic region.

The Nordic countries have taken an active role in the preparation of initiatives concerning the Baltic region and in numerous Baltic cooperation activities and will continue to do so. Our endeavours to promote stability and economic development in the Baltic region also involve the areas of the Russian Federation in this region.

Continued friendly and cooperative relations between Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Russian Federation are fundamentally important for the future stability of the Baltic region. The completion of the process of the withdrawal of foreign military units from the Baltic States is also a decisive contribution to the maintenance of security in the northern European region as a whole.

Permanent security will, however, best be achieved by increasing and deepening trade, economic, and cultural cooperation between the parties. The precondition for such cooperation between the Russian Federation and its Baltic neighbours have now greatly improved. We are confident that in this spirit the parties will build upon the results achieved.

Mr. Inderfurth (United States of America): The United States may claim with justification to be the champion of the independence of the Baltic States. During decades when this goal seemed a will-o'-the-wisp to many, my Government maintained in the words and substance of our policy that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were, and should be, independent nation States, and we insisted on the fulfilment of that independence. Re-establishment of the freedom and independence of these countries in 1991 was greeted with enthusiasm and satisfaction in my country; perhaps nowhere else is there as much appreciation of the cost paid by the Baltic peoples in the long quest for their national self-realization.

Full national independence manifests itself in the sovereign control of a Government over its national territory. For this reason, the United States supported this agenda item at both the forty-seventh and forty-eighth sessions of the General Assembly and lent its support to the good offices of the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, Professor Tommy Koh, in facilitating agreements for the withdrawal of foreign military forces from the Baltic States. The United States also, in a very tangible and practical way, joined the multilateral effort to assist the Russian Federation in the construction of housing for military personnel returning from the Baltic States and for their families.

It is with deep gratification that my delegation takes note of the Secretary-General's report, in which he:

> "commends all the parties concerned for their success in resolving the problems related to the presence of foreign armed forces in the territory of the Baltic States". (*A/49/419, para. 12*)

In particular, the report documents the recent bilateral agreements on the withdrawal of Russian armed forces and on social guarantees for retired military personnel residing in Latvia and Estonia. The peaceful resolution of this issue will mark a new page in the history of the Baltic region and can be the basis for friendly relations in the future.

With independence the Baltic States assumed the obligations contained in various international and regional agreements on human and civil rights. The underlying spirit of these obligations is that people must look to the future and not to the past in their relations with other people. History has often been painful, and especially so for the Baltic nations. However, their future must not be imprisoned by the past. As other countries hold out their hands to the Baltic peoples, we ask them to build their futures on principles rather than on prejudice. We expect the Baltic nations will fulfil their destinies as free, independent and progressive States, and that their restored membership in the community of nations will be reflected in the relations among the communities which live in these countries as well as in relations with their independent and democratic neighbours.

Mr. Kovanda (Czech Republic): These days, when the United Nations is so frequently forced to focus on dismal, even catastrophic events, it is refreshing and stimulating to note that some developments turn out well. Agenda item 26 is an example. The complete withdrawal of Russian military forces, first from Lithuania and, a year later, from Estonia and Latvia, has been accomplished and we can thus scratch this item off our agenda.

The former Czechoslovakia was the first of the erstwhile Warsaw Pact countries to successfully negotiate the withdrawal of Soviet troops from its territory. We are consequently well aware of the intricacies connected with this exercise. In those heady days of 1990, only the greatest optimists, perhaps, only idealists, would have believed that within five years the Baltic countries would be independent, sovereign and free of foreign troops. We are happy that in its own way, the Czech Republic modestly contributed to the efforts that culminated in extraordinary success last August. Our involvement included not only our constant moral support to our Baltic friends but also, for example, our participation last year in Ambassador Tommy Koh's mission to the Baltics on behalf of the Secretary-General.

We note that certain questions remain unresolved. These concern, for example, retired or demobilized personnel of the Russian armed forces currently residing in Estonia and Latvia. We believe, however, that once a solution is reached to the big problems, small problems also will be resolved in due course. We are also aware of the environmental damage that the Russian forces left behind, if only because we encountered a similar situation after their departure from our own country. Cleaning it up will be a great challenge for the Baltic countries, both technically and financially, but it is an important condition for their healthy — in every sense of the word - economic progress.

My Government congratulates our Baltic friends on this occasion, even as, today, Presidents of all three countries are visiting Prague. We also congratulate the leadership of the Russian Federation on having demonstrated the necessary wisdom and resolve in completing a task which, on a personal level, for the soldiers involved, must have been exceedingly difficult. But, as a consequence, Europe's North and the Baltic Sea region have become safer places.

Mr. Ghafoorzai (Afghanistan): For the third consecutive year, the General Assembly is discussing the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of the Baltic States.

My delegation has taken a special interest in this item since it first appeared on the agenda of the General Assembly. As we have stated in the past, the Islamic State of Afghanistan, on the basis of the principles of its foreign policy, is, and will continue to be, against the presence of foreign military forces on any territory under any pretext that goes counter to the will and aspirations of a nation. Any such presence should be terminated immediately, totally and unconditionally.

The creation, after the collapse of the former Soviet Union, of a positive political atmosphere conducive to the peaceful settlement of disputes, an atmosphere helped by the cooperative attitude shown by the countries concerned and commendable efforts of the United Nations, has been marked by remarkable progress towards the realization of the objective for which the item was inscribed on the agenda in 1992.

Last year, after some positive developments had been observed, the Secretary-General was requested by the General Assembly to use his good offices to facilitate the complete withdrawal of foreign military forces from the territories of Estonia and Latvia.

The Secretary-General's report on the implementation of resolution 48/18 indicates positive developments with regard to the situation in Lithuania. We hope that the remaining issues will be resolved more quickly through bilateral channels.

With regard to Latvia, the signing of a number of agreements on practical issues between the Russian Federation and Latvia, which resulted in the withdrawal of Russian forces from Latvia before 31 August 1994, represented progress towards the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly.

As for Estonia, it is a matter for satisfaction that the withdrawal of the remaining Russian troops was completed according to schedule, namely, before 31 August 1994.

Afghanistan commends the cooperative attitude, farsightedness and political wisdom with which the Russian Federation and the Baltic States were able to resolve this issue. With respect to this achievement, the multilateral efforts that facilitated the success of the process should also be commended.

In spite of these achievements, Estonia and Latvia seem to feel some concern that there has not been full implementation of the agreements. However, the positive and cooperative atmosphere and the sense of trust created between the countries concerned as a result of the withdrawals provides assurances that the bilateral channel will be helpful in the resolution of any remaining side issues. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe can play a positive role to this end.

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, as sovereign Member States of the Baltic region, expect every neighbouring State to respect their national laws and regulations and to observe the principles of international law in their mutual relations.

The resolution of the Baltic issue was one of the best examples of the effectiveness of preventive diplomacy, cooperation, understanding and political will, and it certainly enhanced the maintenance of regional and international peace and security.

The long-suffering Baltic nations deserve a chance to make their full contribution and use their potential, for full integration into the economic, political and security structures of Europe.

The people and the Government of the Islamic State of Afghanistan hope that the people of the Baltic States, who have endured decades of pain and suffering, will cherish the values of peace, complete independence and democracy and enjoy further prosperity and progress.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 26?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 156

Building a peaceful and better world through sport: draft resolution A/49/L.46.

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call first on the representative of the United States of America to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.46.

Mr. Young (United States of America): On behalf of the Government of the United States of America and as a representative of that Government, but also as Co-Chairman of the Atlanta Committee to organize the Centennial Olympic Games in 1996, I am very pleased to return to this Hall to share with the Assembly this draft resolution on the building of peace through sport.

I should like to read out the additional sponsors to this draft resolution that were not listed in the printing. It is probably the longest and most distinguished list of nations on any draft resolution sponsored by the United States in a long, long time.

It expresses the unanimity of the family of peoples on this Earth in the belief that it is possible for us to build peace through sport. I should like to add the following countries to the list of sponsors: Afghanistan, Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belize, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, the Central African Republic, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Fiji, Grenada, Guatemala, Iran, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Solomon Islands, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Venezuela and Viet Nam. That makes a total of 134 sponsors of this draft resolution.

It has been the experience of this Assembly and of the family of nations that when we have been able to agree on nothing else we have been able to agree to come together in peaceful competition. Indeed, much of the success of this body has centred around friendships and fellowships that have developed through sport. My own experience here as the United States Ambassador some 15 years ago was that, as a result of my own tennis partnership with the Ambassador of the Soviet Union — we played tennis regularly almost every month and always split sets, as good diplomats should — we maintained the kind of friendship in which, during one three-year period, there was never a United States veto of a Russian item and never a Russian veto of a United States item.

I would also suggest that, as a result of the kind of sports competition that we have seen — the table-tennis friendship with the People's Republic of China, which opened our conversations with that great nation; the Olympic Games in which the United States was first defeated by the Soviet Union in basketball, our game, and then, at a later time, the United States team won in hockey, a winter sport and more of a Russian game — we have developed relationships that have enhanced the work of this body. We in the United States Government and in the Olympic family insist that it is possible to continue to build world peace through sport.

In July 1996, we will celebrate the centennial Olympic Games in the city of Atlanta. We expect more than 200 nations of the world to field athletic squads. In keeping with Olympic tradition and as a result of the suggestion of this Assembly, we will be making great efforts to observe during that period an Olympic Truce. It is our fervent hope and prayer that for 16 days there will be a cessation of all hostilities and that the world may engage in pursuits that strengthen families and the lives of our children. We will be working with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), in this direction and attempting to build bridges of hope and understanding. Since 80 per cent of the world's population will view the Olympic activities on television, we have an opportunity through global communications to involve people all over the world in the events of the Olympic centennial in Atlanta in July 1996.

We have seen that, in spite of the difficulties that might have existed in Nigeria, when its football team was doing well in the World Cup Nigeria seemed to move together a little better. We have seen time and time again nations restoring their own sense of dignity and national honour as their athletes have competed with the athletes of the world and demonstrated the kind of pride and accomplishment that lets us know that the blessings that are upon the children of this planet extend to all races, nations and creeds and that, together, it is possible for us to build a peaceful planet.

It is in this context that our delegation has been pleased to learn that this draft resolution is being sponsored by so many nations. It is my hope that the General Assembly will adopt the draft resolution and that we may begin to celebrate all over the world the fact that for just 16 days there can be a window of opportunity, not for negotiations but simply for peace, and that as a result of that peace the children of the world may find their lives improved and the youth of the world may understand that there is another way for us to live together on this planet.

Mr. Illueca (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The General Assembly is today paying tribute to the Olympic Ideal as a force for international understanding among the youth of the world through sports and culture, with the aim of promoting the harmonious development of mankind. It is a fortunate coincidence that this debate is taking place in 1994, declared by the United Nations as the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal, in commemoration of the centenary of the founding of the International Olympic Committee.

In his message to Mr. Amara Essy, the President of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the International Olympic Committee, affirms that:

> "Olympism will continue to use its conciliatory influence and humanism to foster peace and international understanding".

He adds the striking point that:

> "Sport for all, health for all, teaching the Olympic Ideal, fair play and sports ethics, the protection and preservation of the environment, campaigns against doping, drugs and violence in sports, and preventative education against scourges such as AIDS are all activities that are part of our moral obligation to the international community." (*A/49/720, p. 4*)

We have just heard a statement in harmony with the Olympic Ideal by Ambassador Andrew Young, co-Chairman of the Atlanta Committee to Organize the Centennial Olympic Games. He introduced draft resolution A/49/L.46 and eloquently advocated respect for the Olympic Truce, which it is hoped will be observed during the Centennial Olympic summer Games to be held in Atlanta in 1996. Those who had the privilege of being Ambassador Young's colleagues in the General Assembly, the Security Council and other bodies of the United Nations system are particularly happy to tell him that the United States has never had a good-will Ambassador of higher calibre or as capable of reconciling political realities with the aspirations to freedom, dignity and justice held by so many peoples of different cultural backgrounds and homelands. Ambassador Young's presence here today lends prestige to this world Organization. His moral stature has left indelible imprints of respect and admiration on many international forums. The world and those who espouse human rights see in him the greatest champion in theory and in practice of the course set by Martin Luther King.

Allow me to offer a number of points that we consider to be pertinent.

Panama is taking part in the work of this session of the General Assembly with feelings divided between enthusiasm over the achievements of dialogue and international cooperation and perplexity in the face of the scale of the tasks that still need to be accomplished if we are to realize the dreams of freedom, solidarity, happiness and peace. The inclusion in the agenda of the item now before us, entitled "Building a peaceful and better world through sport", seems to us to be a very wise move.

My delegation sincerely congratulates those who conceived the inclusion of this item. It conveys a fresh and creative idea, which gives food for thought and should stimulate an extremely important dialogue. It is especially manifest in the context of this session of the General Assembly that many political and economic problems are at bottom problems of education and of culture. They are problems associated with the way in which we deal with our own humanity.

Through its Charter, the United Nations established its purposes and conceived an almost miraculous design in order to achieve them. We must acknowledge that it has not achieved those purposes, because mankind is still beset by atrocious injustices in all aspects: biological, moral, political and economic. We believe that it is these injustices that dictate that mankind's great gift for creativity should be offset by an equally strong capacity for destruction. Sometimes we are enthusiastic, because it seems to us that mankind is on the threshold of a rebirth, while at other times we feel disheartened because we feel it is on the brink of the abyss.

When we place all these thoughts and feelings in the context of the history and the present realities of the United Nations, we feel that those of us who are here today should be, in addition to being representatives of Governments or authorized observers, also witnesses to the fact that our feelings are not apocalyptic in nature and that our vision is not one of desperation.

The delegation of Panama, through its statements in the General Assembly, has placed on record its constant concern that the people of Panama, like the people of Latin America, should not live on the sidelines of history. Since the beginning of our national status, we have tended voluntarily or involuntarily to circulate through the arteries of various cultures and to experience the adventure of a kind of universalism capable of unifying the fragments of the world, just as the Panama Canal joins two of the planet's great bodies of water.

In the United Nations we need to be increasingly mindful of the fact that the price of any advance towards the future is borne not by an individual, not by a group, not by a nation, but by the human race. The fact of the contemporary world is that young people who do not seek refuge in drugs, or strong emotions, or violence, or pure consumerism are today asking themselves what they should do in order to avoid a bleaker future. I should add that I say this with great solemnity — a solemnity that is felt by someone who belongs to a generation that, paradoxically, had the good fortune to ask itself during its youth what to do in order to ensure that the future should be better.

For many years now, the United Nations system has set itself ambitious goals, including those that call for education for all, health for all, housing for all. The promotion and the development of physical education and sport for all — children, young people, the elderly — is a vital ingredient in some of these goals. For that reason, it is particularly important that the United Nations should promote cooperation in sport and in physical education at all possible levels: intergovernmental, non-governmental, through the Olympic Movement and through private sponsors. We wish to point out that, in our opinion, the United Nations should give pride of place to promoting the ethical values of sport and physical education, meaning that it should participate in and cooperate with any action aimed at combating anti-sport activities.

Lastly, my delegation, would like to stress certain ideas. The development of sport, as was already stated so eloquently here by Ambassador Young, means a genuine preparation for dialogue among human beings. Sport is the proper arena for the exercise of an active universalism. Sport is a valuable cultural product which, if it is promoted and developed, deepens understanding among people. Sport is a factor in limiting excessive behaviour, in that it strengthens the awareness of human limitations. Sport enables people to build, and people who build are capable of creating a better world in which peace reigns.

The delegation of Panama wishes to pay tribute to the Olympic Movement which, since its origins in Greece, when physical exploits were celebrated alongside music and poetry, has conveyed a single message: that men and women are obliged to cultivate the virtues they possess. Sport is the greatest antidote to the poisons which may lurk in words and in things.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the Olympic Ideal, as Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said, "is a hymn to tolerance and understanding among human beings and cultures". We concur with the Secretary-General that "the Olympic Ideal is a school of democracy" and that "this means that there is a natural link between the ethics of the Olympic Games and the fundamental principles of the United Nations."

In conclusion, I should like to request that the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.46 be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Pierre (Guyana): On 25 October last year, the General Assembly adopted two resolutions of special significance. I refer to the resolution on the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal and the resolution on the observance of the Olympic Truce. The one served to mark the centenary of the International Olympic Committee, while the other called for the cessation of hostilities during the Olympic Games. Together, they were intended to promote international understanding through the medium of sport.

As we in the General Assembly are only too well aware, global peace and security continue to elude our grasp. We are thankful that the period of intense super-Power rivalry is now behind us. The world has retreated from the threat of nuclear annihilation. We are now confronted, however, by numerous localized wars that resist all attempts at resolution — witness the many factional conflicts that are currently in progress in Europe, Africa and other areas of the world.

Commendably, the United Nations — particularly the Security Council — is striving to bring peace and stability to these troubled places. However, we are forced to recognize that, to date, the Organization's success has been severely circumscribed. While we hope for new breakthroughs in the various diplomatic and negotiating processes, we cannot escape the conclusion that new concepts and fresh approaches are needed to deal with the persistence and proliferation of conflict.

The initiatives that have come out of the International Olympic Committee represent a bold and imaginative step forward towards securing durable peace. It is a telling fact that a total of 134 Member States appended their names as sponsors of the draft resolution on observance of the Olympic Truce. The international community obviously hoped that it could in this way revive the practice of the old Olympic Games whereby all aggression was suspended for their duration.

By extending the principle of *ekecheria*, or Olympic Truce, we can at least pray for some respite, however temporary, from the killings and destruction that accompany conflict. The truce, as we know it, normally lasted for the period of the sporting event. During that time national rivalries, jealousies and considerations of politics, race, religion, wealth and social status were cast aside. Kings competed with commoners for the honour of winning the simple branch of wild olive which was given to each victor and which, over the years, has come to symbolize peace.

With political commitment, however, the Olympic Truce, which was considered sacred by all participants, could be prolonged indefinitely. We therefore call upon people of goodwill everywhere to place at the forefront of their thoughts and action the principles and ideals that *ekecheria* and Olympism seek to propagate. To those currently engaged in conflict we issue the appeal that, despite the urgency and validity of the causes for which they struggle, they show some regard for these higher principles that have been endorsed by the United Nations.

The fundamental principles of the Olympic Movement embrace the values and ideals of this Organization. It is therefore possible for the Movement to collaborate with us in the campaign to achieve world peace. It has made a valuable contribution towards the building of a better world through sport. The United Nations, for its part, has taken a major step in furthering its own efforts to foster peace and development by its full acceptance and endorsement of the concept of the Olympic Truce.

We are pleased to note the appreciable effort that the International Olympic Committee is making to provide humanitarian assistance to several war-torn areas. Such assistance enables the international community to make the best possible response to the growing number of situations that require its intervention. We wish to commend the Committee for its positive contribution and to invite its continued involvement in the work of our Organization. Accordingly, we are among the sponsors of draft resolution A/49/L.46, which seeks to bring the International Olympic Committee into a closer relationship with the United Nations system.

The occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, which we shall be celebrating next year, should see a concerted international effort to fulfil the principal aim of the Organization's Charter — namely, to rid this and succeeding generations of the scourge of war. Our peoples — particularly our youth — need to be educated in the virtues of peace. In this context, we welcome and endorse the proposal to hold a meeting of Ministers for youth and sport to consider the item

"Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic Ideal". Out of this forum should emerge a plan of cooperation to forge stronger links in sport between Member States — links that would bring them together in healthy competition instead of hostile confrontation.

As the Olympic torch moves from Barcelona to Atlanta, we must work to ensure that by the summer of 1996, when the International Olympic Committee will observe its centennial, a permanent truce will have been called in conflicts between and within nations. It will certainly be a worthy achievement if, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, mankind can enter a new age of universal peace and harmony.

Mr. Ibrahim Diallo (Guinea) *(interpretation from French):* Although the delegation of Guinea has already congratulated you, Mr. President, and expressed its pride at seeing you conducting the work of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, I hope that you will allow me, as a friend and brother, to carry out the sacred duty of expressing to the prominent representatives of nations gathered in this Assembly my sincere and deep gratitude for honouring with their confidence such a distinguished and eminent diplomat as our President Mr. Essy Amara.

We have before us a draft resolution relating to the Olympic Ideal, one of whose principles is to place sports at the service of the harmonious development of mankind with a view to encouraging the establishment of a peaceful society that desires the preservation of human dignity. With its symbol of five rings, representing the union of five continents and the meeting of athletes of the entire world in the Olympic Games, and with its famous slogan, "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*", the International Olympic Committee, of which I have the honour to be a member, has devoted itself for an entire century to the promotion of physical and sporting education.

The report of the President of the International Olympic Committee and the Coordinator of the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal, the documents on the Olympic Truce that have been distributed to representatives' Missions and the summary that has been distributed by the Secretariat clearly demonstrate the efforts that are being made by Governments and by national Olympic Committees.

Equally, the overwhelming support of 134 countries for the draft resolution that is before the Assembly — a record, as has been pointed out by Ambassador Andrew Young — demonstrates the Assembly's interest in everything connected with youth, education, peace and international understanding based on friendship and solidarity.

The International Olympic Committee, through one of its specialized agencies — Olympic Solidarity — carries out at least three projects a year in every country of the world. The Committee provides scholarships for athletes, the most famous of whom is our Mozambican sister, Maria Lurdes Mutola, the world champion in the women's 800 metres event. Furthermore, it guarantees to preserve the universality of the Games and ensures the participation in them of athletes throughout the world by taking responsibility for the preparation of six athletes and two leaders per country.

The International Olympic Committee is the only non-governmental organization in which each national Olympic Committee member pays no dues; on the contrary, members receive an annual budget for their administration and the financing of their development projects.

One can never say enough about the important contribution which sports and culture offer to the world through events such as the World Cup, other world championships and the Olympic Games, all serving as examples to be followed. Today more than ever, the international community must understand that armed conflicts, racial and religious hatred and discrimination, intolerance and narrow-mindedness must henceforth give way to the healthy competition of body and mind, as taught and practised through sport and culture.

For this reason I should like to offer two instructive examples of communion in sport. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, victim of a war we all deplore, the Bosnian Olympic Committee recently organized sports events in Sarajevo, Tuzla and Zenica. In Zenica there was a rugby match in which the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) participated. During the Olympic Games in Barcelona, in July 1992, in the famous 10,000-metre women's finals, the whole world witnessed an extraordinary gesture. Throughout the race two young women were engaged in a hard-fought struggle for the gold medal. When they crossed the finish line, the winner, the young Ethiopian, Derra Tutula, and her then rival on the track, Elena Mayer, a South African, threw their arms around each other. Forgetting everything that had divided and separated them since long before birth, the young African woman and the young white South African woman wrapped themselves in their respective national flags and, hand in hand, took a victory lap before the delirious spectators in the stadium and millions of television viewers. Through this marvelous, spontaneous gesture by two athletes who were not even 20 years old, sport buried apartheid for ever.

We therefore fully agree with the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, when he says,

> "The Olympic Ideal inspires tolerance, understanding between States, human beings and cultures. It encourages competition, but competition with respect for others. In their own way the Olympic Games are a school of democracy. There is a natural link between the ethics of the Olympic Games and the fundamental principles of the United Nations."

Because of this truth, the delegation of the Republic of Guinea and the 132 other sponsors of the draft resolution before the Assembly ask that it be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): At the last session of the General Assembly, thanks to the initiative taken by the Organization of African Unity, we had the opportunity to consider the question of building a peaceful and better world through sport. As a result of that debate, the General Assembly adopted resolution 48/10, which declared 1994 International Year of Sport, and resolution 48/11, on the observance of the "Olympia Truce". Spain was one of the sponsors of those resolutions.

Once again I have the honour of addressing the Assembly on the question of the Olympic Ideal. Spain's association with the Olympic Movement in the modern era dates back to the advent of the modern Olympic Movement. Three Spaniards — Aniceto Sela, Adolfo Posada and Adolfo Buylla, all illustrious professors at the University of Oviedo — were present at the formation of the International Olympic Committee, which took place at the University of the Sorbonne in Paris exactly 100 years ago. For this reason we are particularly pleased that in this International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal it is also a Spaniard, Juan Antonio Samaranch, who is presiding over the destiny of the Olympic Movement.

In 1994 Spain has spared no effort to commemorate the centenary of the International Olympic Committee as it deserves to be commemorated: by supporting observance of the "Olympia Truce" in zones of armed conflict and contributing through a variety of activities to the attainment of the objectives of the International Olympic Year. For example, in 1994 Spain has hosted the fourth congress of the Ibero-American Association of Olympic Academies and organized the first iconographic exhibit on the life of the founder of the modern Olympic Movement, Baron Pierre de Coubertin.

I should also like to recall that in 1992 my country organized the XXV Olympiad of the modern era in Barcelona, which was attended by all 169 countries members of the Olympic Movement after a number of Olympic Games that, because of various types of problems, had not enjoyed the participation of all members. The opening ceremony was attended by the King and Queen of Spain and 36 Heads of State and Government. I wish to underscore the presence there of another, particularly important guest: Mr. Nelson Mandela, later to be elected President of the Republic of South Africa. That occasion gave eloquent proof of Spain's faithfulness to the Olympic Ideal since the launching of the modern Olympic Movement in 1894. I should like to express the hope that the next Games, which will be held in 1996 in Atlanta and will mark the centenary of the Games of the modern era, will be another advance in the universalization of the Olympic Movement and in its contribution to peace and understanding between individuals and between peoples.

The International Olympic Committee is becoming more and more involved in humanitarian activities in various parts of the world. It also provides technical and financial assistance to developing countries through the executive agency of the Olympic Committee, which is known as Olympic Solidarity. Furthermore, the International Olympic Committee, in cooperation with various agencies of the United Nations system, is carrying out a world-wide campaign of preventive education aimed at young people and addressing grave problems in our societies, such as drugs and AIDS. It is also engaged in activities in the area of protection and preservation of the environment. In the last analysis, all these activities contribute to the building of a better world, in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

In this context, and in support of the efforts of the Olympic Movement to realize the objectives we all share, the Spanish delegation has joined the other sponsors of the draft resolution introduced today, and we are confident that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): I have the honour to speak today on behalf of the current President of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

At its forty-eighth session the General Assembly proclaimed 1994 the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal, thereby emphasizing its commitment to the principles and objectives the Olympic Movement has constantly upheld and disseminated — that is, the building of a peaceful and better world by educating the youth of the world through sport allied to culture.

For their part, the African Heads of State and Government, meeting at Tunis in June 1994 and inspired by that same ideal, reaffirmed their support for the proclamation of 1994 as the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal in order to mobilize the youth of the whole world in the cause of peace.

The African Heads of State also stressed the importance of the initiative taken by the International Olympic Committee to declare an Olympic Truce in the cause of peace. That initiative, which revives an ancient Greek tradition, is all the more valuable because it is completely in keeping with the principles of the United Nations Charter and promotes a spirit of fraternity and understanding between peoples.

In addition, the role played by the International Olympic Committee in the humanitarian sphere and in the sphere of its cooperation with various specialized agencies and national and regional Olympic organizations should be encouraged and strengthened because their input is of such great importance in promoting efforts to achieve better living conditions for human beings, which in turn helps to preserve international peace and security, given their obvious link to development.

In that spirit, my delegation supports the request contained in the draft resolution before us, under which the International Olympic Committee will be invited to attend various international conferences, including the Copenhagen social summit, the Peking Conference on women and the Nairobi Conference on human settlements, and thereby provide the International Olympic Committee with an opportunity to expand its field of interests and enhance its contribution to international cooperation.

In conclusion, we congratulate the International Olympic Committee on the commemoration of its centenary this year and express the Tunisian Government's keen interest in Olympic activities, which it has always supported and encouraged. The draft resolution before us is a text that deserves everyone's support with a view to promoting Olympic activities in behalf of peace and understanding between peoples.

Mr. Gervais (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): The International Olympic Committee is this year celebrating the hundredth anniversary of its founding at Paris in 1894, on the initiative of the French educator Baron Pierre de Coubertin. To pay tribute to that organization, which is led and supported on a volunteer basis, the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, in its resolution 48/10, proclaimed 1994 as the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal.

As the Assembly knows, the Olympic Movement is devoted to helping build a better and more peaceful world by educating youth through sport practised free from any form of discrimination and in the Olympic spirit, which stands for mutual understanding, friendship, solidarity and fair play.

In associating sport with culture and education, the Olympic Movement has set out to foster a life style based on joy through effort, on the value of education and respect for fundamental and universal principles. It was because of our belief in the Olympic Ideal that Côte d'Ivoire, a land of encounter, dialogue and fraternity, acted as host in 1977, at Abidjan, to the General Assembly of the world's Olympic National Committees, which thus met for the first time on African soil.

It need hardly be noted that it was because of the Olympic Ideal that the Olympic Movement in the 1960s joined in the struggle against apartheid in sport, then rife in South Africa. Nor need we dwell on the fact that the Olympic Committee is involved in humanitarian activities in countries engaged in armed conflict and that it is cooperating with the United Nations system in the areas of education, health and the environment.

As we are all aware, at its forty-eighth session the General Assembly adopted a resolution advocating an Olympic Truce, inspired by the ancient Greek tradition of *ekecheria*. In that resolution, of which my country was a sponsor, the Assembly urges respect for an ancient custom in our quest for universal peace and the protection of human rights. Through that praiseworthy initiative, I am happy to affirm that my country, Côte d'Ivoire, will continue to support and encourage the Olympic Movement.

As we have all been gratified to note from the document entitled "Olympic Truce" and in the final report on the International Year of Sport and the Olympic Ideal, the political and sports authorities of our various countries have been mobilized pursuant to resolutions 48/10 and 48/11. That mobilization attests to our countries' widespread interest in activities inspired by the Olympic spirit. I welcome the excellent results that have been obtained and pay tribute to the Olympic Movement for what it has done to promote the peace and the well-being of mankind.

The Olympic Ideal, which was the inspiration for the fundamental principles of our Organization, is thus in close harmony with the ideals of the United Nations Charter; hence the Assembly's interest in and expectations for the preparations for the next Games now under way in Atlanta, Georgia — and here we salute the remarkable energy and unique dedication Mr. Andrew Young and his team are bringing to that effort.

The Olympic Ideal must be constantly renewed if its flame is not to go out. Thus, the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, could not better express its support and encouragement to all who are striving to promote that ideal — like Mr. Andrew Young and the city of Atlanta — than by adopting the draft resolution now before us.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this agenda item, which has enabled us to welcome here Ambassador Andrew Young, the former Permanent Representative of the United States of America, and Ambassador Ibrahim Diallo, the former Permanent Representative of Guinea.

The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/49/L.46.

The following countries have become sponsors of the draft resolution: Brazil, Nicaragua, Oman and Tajikistan. The number of sponsors of the draft resolution now totals 138.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.46?

Draft resolution A/49/L.46 was adopted (resolution 49/29).

The President (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 156?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 159

Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies: draft resolution (A/49/L.49)

The President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Nicaragua to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.49.

Mr. Vilchez Asher (Nicaragua) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The international political scene has undergone momentous changes in recent years. The world landscape until recently was very gloomy, because of the cold war, where effects made it impossible to imagine the scope of the changes that would occur later as a result of the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The fall of the Berlin wall and the ensuing political changes galvanized the democratization process in Latin America and the Caribbean, in Africa, in Asia and in Europe. It also promoted the strengthening of the United Nations and the resolution of grave conflicts which had threatened international peace and security for many years.

On the new world scene, country after country has recognized democracy as the best system of government. Many electoral processes have taken place and political parties have formed in order to participate in democratic life have proliferated. Governments are now more tolerant, and more than ever before show respect for, and seek reconciliation with, their political opponents. Dictatorial presidents of the past are disappearing, just as totalitarian systems, apartheid and slavery have disappeared.

Since the Second World War, mankind has experienced nothing as dramatic as it has in this decade, with the collapse of totalitarianism. As a result of this process, millions of human beings have regained their freedom, and the consolidation of democracy has begun; democracy is now becoming universal, if not absolute, in the world.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakhstan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

This new trend and heartening progress on the world political scene offers an unprecedented opportunity to improve international cooperation for peace, development and democracy-building. But we must also recognize that these opportunities are fragile and likely to be short-lived, and if due advantage is not taken of them they will be swept away by negative trends which are appearing at the same time.

Conflicts and violence still persist in the world, both between States and within them. The savage resurgence of ethnic struggles, both of long standing and of recent origin; the threat of religious intolerance; new forms of racism and nationalism; recourse to terrorism; and flagrant aggression: all these seem to conspire to hinder the building of a more peaceful, safe, fair and tolerant world.

These same factors have also caused the disintegration of States and societies. This seems inconsistent with the tendency towards integration and greater interdependence of States, which would yield major economic and political benefits. Furthermore, international peace and security cannot be maintained in the new circumstances if the traditional concept of security is not broadened to include non-military aspects, such as structural underdevelopment and mass poverty, an acute scarcity of resources and the constant degradation of the environment.

However, the international community acknowledges today that the basis for solving many of the problems I have mentioned is the democratic system. Nevertheless, the future of democracy is still in jeopardy. Democracy is neither clear cut nor uniform, and in most cases is still based on flimsy political, economic and social structures. What is worse, many of our countries are plagued by hunger, poverty and despair, which may cancel out the accomplishments of the new and restored democracies and once again raise the spectre of war.

The fruits of the new international society, democratic and free, to which we all aspire will to a large extent depend on whether the process of transition is wholeheartedly supported. In the context of building a new international order, the United Nations has a historic responsibility under its Charter towards the future of the processes of democratization in the countries to which I have referred, in view of their vulnerability.

The United Nations should make it a priority to support the struggle being waged by many of the new or restored democracies to survive and to consolidate the processes under way, for that task accords with the purposes and principles of our Organization. Should these efforts come to nothing, and should faith in democracy be lost, the world might see a return to the old systems of domination and oppression.

The international community would be mistaken if it thought that in these nascent processes democracy can flourish on its own, and that simply enacting laws to abolish theories that condemn millions of human beings to a life of humiliation, a life under oppression, is enough to ensure that these new democratic processes can take hold spontaneously.

The international community has been slow to accept, and even slower to understand, the complexities and the scope of the emerging new democracies and the emancipation of old and new nations. These realities have been recognized only with difficulty. It is obvious that the world was not ready to tackle the obstacles and consequences, temporarily destabilizing, of processes which would ultimately lead to the full democratization of international relations.

For these reasons, the consolidation of a new, stable and secure international order, free from the dramatic inconsistencies of the past, calls for a renewed worldwide commitment through an international covenant on peace and democracy, under which the United Nations system will be called upon to play a particularly significant role.

We hail the wisdom of the Secretary-General, who included democracy among the five dimensions of development, and described it as the major task facing the international community and the greatest challenge facing our Organization.

A strengthened multilateral system which would really attain the purposes of the Charter and address the realities of the 1990s and beyond demands sustained international cooperation in order to ensure that the national policies in many of the countries in transition are viable.

Strengthening the international cooperation system to promote democracy requires an agenda coordinated between the United Nations system and international financial institutions. The requisite economic and financial stability must be based on political and social stability, with respect for human rights. For this reason, there is a need to re-establish and bolster democratic structures, which, together with poverty relief policies and policies to protect the environment, may make healthy and fair economic growth sustainable. Hence, we support the call of the Economic and Social Council and the World Hearings on Development.

Strengthening world democratic structures is the very essence of the common work of the United Nations system. The pioneering role the United Nations has played in Nicaragua through the work of the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), as well as in other Central American countries through various initiatives, is one small example of the support the United Nations can provide to other countries, in particular new or restored democracies, that request it.

It is also important for the international community, through the United Nations system, to support internal efforts at concertation, to bring new protagonists into political, economic and social processes, to bolster electoral systems, to improve judicial structures, to support parliamentary activities, to improve observance of human rights, and to support political, administrative and financial decentralization. All those areas call for special attention in the context of cooperation for development. The transition from conflict to peace, to the rehabilitation of physical and human infrastructures and to sustainable development requires the consolidation of solid, lasting democratic institutions.

The consolidation of the majority of new or restored democracies requires sustained, determined action at the national level and complementary cooperation from outside. This should not end with the conclusion of political agreements or the holding of elections, but should be sustained until commitments are fulfilled. The final goal should be the consolidation of peace and democracy and, hence, political and economic stability.

The renewed confidence in multilateralism as vital for resolving the crucial questions of our time is the product of the positive climate in international relations. It has created great opportunities for the United Nations to give broad support to new processes of transition to peace and democracy.

It is no secret that the international community is slowly moving away from confrontation and inaugurating a new age of cooperation and understanding, with greater respect for the principles of international law and for the observance of human rights, thus beginning a more positive phase of international cooperation. My delegation considers that, among the major objectives of the Agenda for Peace and of the Agenda for Development, the United Nations should give its firmest support not only to economic reform but also to the transition to democracy and to the strengthening of institutions in new or restored democracies that request such support to prevent their gains from being reversed and to ensure lasting peace.

United Nations support for new or restored democracies can have many dimensions and objectives. There are countless initiatives that the United Nations could take in this sphere. In that spirit, and given the large number of options — such as the cost of war compared with that of conflict prevention — we share the view that the international community could consider the establishment of a trust fund to provide special resources to support the efforts and initiatives of Governments requesting such resources to help in strengthening democratic institutions, management capacity in key areas, and of the governability of our countries.

In that context, I want to recall these words used by the President of Nicaragua, Mrs. Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, during the general debate at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly:

> "I believe that countries in transition from war to peace, which have signed international agreements to attain total pacification, democracy and reconstruction, should have access to a special fund to enable them to stand again on their own feet and go forward". *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings, 8th meeting, p. 12)*

This fund, which could be a trust fund, would be administered by the United Nations in accordance with its rules and regulations, and appropriate follow-up machinery would be devised for managing the fund. Contributions could include: voluntary contributions from the peace dividend resulting, *inter alia*, from reductions in military budgets; contributions by interested Governments; and contributions from other governmental, private or individual sources committed to democracy. Along with other United Nations initiatives, the fund could be an excellent agent of preventive diplomacy and peace-building, and would be extremely efficient, considering that the sums involved would be insignificant compared with the enormous, inevitable cost of war in terms of human suffering and serious material damage, or with the lesser but still great cost of deploying peace-keeping operations when it has become difficult to prevent war.

The main goal of the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held at Managua in July this year, was not merely to reaffirm the pre-eminence and effectiveness of representative democracy as a system of government, with broad consideration of the question of governability in new democracies, and the successes, weaknesses, prospects and challenges of those democracies in the new international context, but also to heighten international awareness of the complexity of these processes. At the Conference we adopted the Managua Declaration and a Plan of Action that we believe are of historic importance. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for having circulated those documents as an annex to document A/49/713. The documents contain specific recommendations intended to preserve and build on previous achievements in the democratization process; these can provide the international community and the United Nations with an integrated frame of reference that will be useful in providing support to new or restored democracies.

The Assembly's consideration of this item enables us to look at various alternatives and to adopt important recommendations to put into effect the commitments set out in the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action. It will also enable us to share frankly and fully with the rest of the international community our Governments' concern with respect to the structural vulnerability of new or restored democracies, which stems from internal factors as well as from an international economic environment that seems to conspire against democracy.

In that connection, over 70 countries agreed, under the procedures established, to request the Secretary-General at this session to prepare a study of the ways and mechanisms by which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, especially since that is consistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations in the areas of the maintenance of international peace and security and of economic and social development.

I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/49/L.49, entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies", on behalf of its 55 sponsors, to which I can now add Armenia, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan. The draft resolution reflects the widespread interest of Members of the United Nations to look objectively and realistically at the question of consolidating democracy in countries that are undergoing a transition in that direction.

The draft resolution is straightforward and concise. In its first preambular paragraph the Assembly would note with satisfaction that the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies was held in Managua, Nicaragua. The widespread interest in that Conference was evidenced by the presence of more than 70 countries from all over the world as participants and observers, in addition to special guests and international bodies. There was an exchange of experiences that will unquestionably enrich and energize the democratic processes of each of our countries, and will make a special contribution to world peace.

In the second preambular paragraph the Assembly would recognize the importance of the documents adopted at the Conference. The political Declaration stressed the value of democracy as an integral part of the overall political process, and noted the relationship between political stability, reconciliation and sustainable development at the national level, and peace and security at the international level, all within a broader concept of security. At the same time, it appealed to the international community to devote greater attention to the efforts undertaken and the obstacles faced by new or restored democracies. The Plan of Action identified priority areas and specific measures to promote new or restored democracies. This was the first time that a large number of countries had adopted a document of this kind.

In the third preambular paragraph the Assembly would note that the Conference participants decided to request the Secretary-General to undertake a study of the item now under consideration.

Operative paragraphs 1 and 2 request the Secretary-General to prepare and submit a comprehensive report, identifying the ways and mechanisms in which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

Operative paragraph 3 requests the inclusion of the item now under consideration on the agenda of the next session of the General Assembly. This reflects the urgent need for the United Nations to continue considering this matter. The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is an appropriate occasion for the international community to reaffirm its commitment to democracy within the framework of an innovative approach to support these processes.

In this context, the conciseness of that the draft resolution, as well as the clarity and the feasibility of its requests, can be readily appreciated. Hence, the sponsors hope that the General Assembly will adopt it unanimously.

The spirit of the twenty-first century can already be discerned; and when the next millennium of our era begins, mankind will still be faced with critical global problems threatening its very existence. However, we cannot deny that the world has become a slightly better and slightly fairer place, in which democracy is the keystone for the construction of tomorrow's world.

The international community must not turn its back on the new horizons being offered to new or restored democracies by changing international circumstances. Let us together explore the ways and means that will enable us to free ourselves from the shadows of the upheavals of that period of history known as the cold war. Let us work to ensure that people, to ensure that the youth, women and children of tomorrow will live in peace and with hope. Let us not let future generations, the precious resource of democracy, pay the price of our failures.

The President: I propose that we now close the list of speakers on this item. If I hear no objection, it will be so decided.

It was so decided.

Mr. Dumitriu (Romania): The agenda item entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" might begin a new era in the post-cold war history of the United Nations. Democracy may prove itself a key word for the endeavours of the Organization aimed at preserving peace and security and at building a comprehensive framework for development and for enduring human progress.

A democratic society will always be inclined to put intelligence and wisdom in play to solve its problems or settle conflicts, instead of resorting to force. As wisely underlined in the latest Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization:

> "Democracy fosters creativity, good governance and the stability that can maintain progress towards development over time." *(A/49/1, para. 6)*

Yet, recognition of the importance of democratic mechanisms and institutions as a common value can give a new lease of life to the attempts of the international community to face the challenges of development.

This was precisely the crucial message of the documents adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua in July 1994. In this perspective, the participants in the Conference decided to request the Secretary-General to study ways and mechanisms in which the United Nations could support the efforts to promote and consolidate democracy. The Conference recognized the value of democracy as an integral part of the political and development processes in national societies and of peace and security in the international community. It also expressed the conviction that the advance of democratic and pluralistic systems, promotion of political and civil liberties and granting equal opportunities are important prerequisites for consistent and sustainable development.

The process of strengthening democratic institutions and pursuing economic reforms in the new or restored democracies is confronted by serious obstacles. Therefore, there is a clear need to broaden the dialogue between the old democracies and the new or restored ones in a common effort to consolidate democracy and ensure its irreversible character everywhere.

In view of its universal vocation and competence, the United Nations cannot stand aside. It should energize its own capabilities to participate in this process. The experience of the Organization, for example, in supporting electoral activities and the capacity-building of national democratic institutions as well as in post-conflict peace-building represent an asset that the United Nations will know how to continue and enhance. We believe that support for democracy is part and parcel of preventive diplomacy. We are convinced that adoption of today's draft resolution will be a significant step in what may become a new dimension of United Nations activity.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Philippines for its forward-looking idea of organizing, as early as in 1988, the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies. In the specific circumstances of that time, the Manila Conference identified a very precious asset in the international dialogue that augured well for subsequent developments in world affairs which culminated in the revolutionary year 1989.

We would also like to thank the Government of Nicaragua for reviving the idea and sparing no effort to ensure the success of the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies. Indeed, the Managua Conference resulted not only in unprecedented participation but also with substantial documents rich in theoretical and practical ideas.

The Government of Romania, which was designated to host the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in 1996, is fully committed to continuing and enriching the praiseworthy work accomplished by its predecessors. It is our belief that international forums for democracy should not repeat what other bodies have already done or argue on controversial matters that have not, thus far, been solved. The Conference on democracy is trying to enhance the international dialogue on the basis of a fundamental asset: democratic values as shared by countries, irrespective of their level of economic development, and of their tradition and experience in democratic life.

In this respect, we are deeply grateful to the European Union and its member States, which grasped the message launched by the new or restored democracies and supported the initiative referred to in draft resolution A/49/L.49. My country is particularly pleased to note this encouraging support inasmuch as its own cooperation with the European Union in the last five years has constantly intensified.

It is our hope that the draft resolution entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies" will be adopted by consensus. It is our conviction that measures provided therein will bring about the results expected by Member States.

Mr. Mabilangan (Philippines): The Philippines supports draft resolution A/49/L.49. We hope that it will be adopted by consensus by the General Assembly.

I should like to use the preambular and operative paragraphs of the draft resolution as a framework for my comments.

The first preambular paragraph refers to the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held from 4 to 6 July 1994. The Philippines congratulates the Government of Nicaragua on hosting that Conference. The first Conference was held in Manila in 1988, two years after democratic institutions had been restored in the Philippines. Thirteen States participated in the Manila Conference. In Managua, last July, over 50 States and many observers participated.

A Declaration was adopted in Manila. In Managua, as is noted in the second preambular paragraph, both a Declaration and a Plan of Action were adopted. Managua reaffirmed the fundamental elements of the Manila Declaration and elaborated on them. The Plan of Action manifested the seriousness of new and restored democracies about maintaining and improving their democratic institutions, despite problems both internal and external.

The Philippines believes that the request made of the Secretary-General in the third preambular paragraph and in operative paragraph 1 is fully in line with his own thinking. In his 6 May 1994 report to the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development, the Secretary-General identified five dimensions of development: peace, the economy, environmental protection, social justice and democracy.

In that report, the Secretary-General states that

> "Democracy and development are linked in fundamental ways. They are linked because democracy provides the only long-term basis for managing competing ethnic, religious, and cultural interests in a way that minimizes the risk of violent internal conflict. They are linked because democracy is inherently attached to the question of governance, which has an impact on all aspects of development efforts. They are linked because democracy is a fundamental human right, the advancement of which is itself an important measure of development. They are linked because people's participation in the decision-making processes which affect their lives is a basic tenet of development" *(A/48/935, para. 120)*.

The Secretary-General also very rightly reminds us in his report that

> "the World Conference on Human Rights stressed the mutually reinforcing interrelationship of democracy, development and respect for human rights" *(ibid., para. 119)*.

In the context of the United Nations consideration of development as a priority issue of our times, the linkage of democracy and development is very significant. Because of this linkage and the obvious linkage of development to domestic stability and international peace and security, it is important for the United Nations — an organization committed to "the prevention and removal of threats to the peace" — to support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

For the Philippines and for other democracies — whether old or new — United Nations support for democratic Governments should seem easy, since the founding fathers of the Organization reaffirmed in the Charter their faith

> "in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small" —

elements essential to a democracy. In fact, the United Nations prides itself on the democratic nature of its governance and of its procedural *modus operandi*.

But United Nations support, to be effective and durable, should be based on a serious study of the scope of support, of ways and means to achieve objectives, and of organization-wide acceptance of the objectives and the means. What, on a concrete level, can the United Nations do, and what can it or should it not do?

One year should be sufficient for carrying out such a study, including consultations with Member States and with political scientists, economists and other experts. Thus, the Philippines agrees to the request, in operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, that the Secretary-General submit a report on the study to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, coinciding with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

In order for the Secretary-General's study to be properly appreciated by the general membership of the United Nations, the General Assembly should incorporate in the agenda of its fiftieth session an item entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

The Conference of New and Restored Democracies, which was first held in Manila, moved to Latin America this year and will be held in Europe in two years. The report of the Secretary-General and its discussion by the General Assembly will serve as an important input to the Third International Conference of New and Restored Democracies, which will be hosted by Romania in 1996.

Let me reiterate the full support of the Philippine delegation for draft resolution A/49/L.49, which was introduced by my colleague from Nicaragua.

Mr. Mongbe (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): Before getting to the heart of the matter before us, I should like to pay a sincere tribute to the people and the Government of Nicaragua for the warm welcome they gave my delegation during the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in their beautiful capital, Managua, from 4 to 6 July 1994. Their excellent organizational abilities ensured the success of that Conference, the fruits of which we are enjoying today.

I welcome the opportunity to say a few words from this rostrum on the restoration of democracy in several African countries, including Benin; on the strengthening of democratic regimes throughout the world; and on the cooperation that must exist between young democracies on all continents as well as their relationships with the older democracies and with the United Nations system.

I do not wish to engage in tiresome or laborious process of definition and semantics. Hence, I shall merely spell out at the outset what my delegation understands by democracy.

The idea of democracy has become multifaceted and thus cannot be locked into a single definition that might qualify or disqualify certain political systems. Of course, it is very useful to highlight freedom as the keystone of the democratic structure and thus conform to a reality that makes us feel more comfortable about pluralistic democracy. This presupposes that the democratization process implies respect for fundamental rights, the opening of political dialogue, free elections and alternating accessions to power designed to guarantee a pluralistic society.

The present situation in Africa clearly indicates that the States that accept true pluralism are those that ensure the promotion and respect of human rights in their entirety, even if conflicts can still occur and there are still varying degrees of protection of those rights.

There would be no point in delving here into the merits of a democratic or a pluralistic society. What I should like to say, as others have done, is that political pluralism and democracy should not appear only as words in the Constitution or be used to spruce up political discourse, thus serving only as an alluring window display that in no way corresponds to anything inside the store.

I must say a few words here on the democratization movement that has shaken up the African continent over the past few years. I wish to recall that, in Africa, the States that were structured in the pre-colonial era were truly multi-ethnic federations. Colonization created quite heterogenous entities resulting from negotiations on the spot that arose from exploration, military expeditions and commercial interests.

At the time of independence, the colonial Powers did not opt for federations or large entities. On the contrary, they encouraged the Balkanization of Africa. Thus were born States that were weak on both the political and the economic level. The difference between the precolonial African States and those emerging from decolonization is that the former exercised limited functions at the level of central power, guaranteeing security and collecting tribute or duties without intervening in the social relations within each ethnic group, which maintained its language, laws and customs. On the other hand, the modern African States, designed from the outset to mimic the European colonizing States, sought to define and impose laws that were supposed to represent the will of the entire collective and therefore became caricatures of those they wished to imitate.

The state system of dominating and unifying society, and the desire to give society a national identity and to mobilize the population around new ideals formed the bases of the authoritarian formula chosen by almost every government after independence. This would explain the unanimous discourse observed in most one-party African States, Black African presidentialisms, the inroads of so-called African socialism and so on. After the military replaced politicians deemed incompetent or corrupt, it preserved the same language and behaviour in the name of the "public weal", "national reconstruction", "national renewal", sometimes even of "peoples revolutions" and a host of others.

In short, monolithism was the rule almost throughout Africa, where traditional aristocracies, trade unions, women's movements and youth associations were simply lumped together under one party. All forms of basic freedoms were stifled and the concept of human rights became a dangerous virus to be stamped out in any intellectual or citizen who would dare to refer to them.

Arbitrary arrests, detention without trial, sham courts, torture, political assassinations and other violations of human rights were frequently the lot of African populations during these decades. As if to put the finishing touches to this already surreal picture of conditions in their countries, certain leaders plunged headlong into corruption, chaos and the pillage of national finances by the scandalous transferral of funds into foreign bank accounts, leaving their peoples in destitution and poverty, with the resulting hunger, infant mortality and high death rates. What would seem to be even more shocking, and what history has not sufficiently decried, is that many of these leaders enjoyed the support of non-African countries that were champions of democracy and, in some cases, of countries of the former communist bloc. Some even had sponsors in both camps.

It is this picture — painted in very broad strokes, to be sure — that we must keep in mind if we are to understand the need for the changes currently under way in Africa. The local conditions of each country involved — geographical, historical, sociological and so on — have largely shaped the course of events.

Since 1987, and more openly in 1988, glasnost and perestroika breathed new vitality, a breath of spring, into the political life of the Soviet Union. The Soviet peoples and the Eastern Europeans began to cherish the hope of being able to shake off the totalitarian yoke.

At the same time, in October 1988, the population of Algiers rose as one to challenge political monolithism and compel its leaders to embark on the path of democratic reform. This was the start of the great democratization movement that is still making waves throughout Africa, with more or less happy results. This irreversible movement has won its place in history, even if it can be neither imported nor exported.

In my country, Benin, the democratization process developed in a fashion that is almost unique when compared to all the difficulties that were unfortunately experienced elsewhere. Indeed, to put an end to arbitrary power and economic decline, the country's grassroots leadership — political figures, youth associations, women's movements, religious groups and leaders, intellectuals, peasants' groups, development associations, human rights activists and traditional leaders — put constant pressure on the Marxist military regime and eventually compelled it to accept dialogue.

Thus, harried by quarrels within the ruling party and the government team and by social tensions within the country that had gradually paralysed the functioning of the State, the Head of State at that time, in order to resolve the crisis, resigned himself to convening a national conference of the nation's grassroots leadership. This conference, which took place in Cotonou in February 1990, enjoyed extensive powers. It laid the foundations for a democratic renewal based on the principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and multiparty governance, and drew up new political guidelines. It established a transition period of one year with democratic institutions responsible for the effective implementation of its decisions, among which was the drafting of a constitution to be submitted to a popular referendum.

The task appeared to be a gamble in which few people, within or outside Benin, placed much faith. Today, all agree that the transition in Benin was peaceful, even if certain obstacles, such as the clash of political ambitions, had to be overcome. The success of the mission was due to the enthusiasm and maturity of the people of Benin, the wisdom of experienced political leaders, the tact of those involved in the democratic renewal, and the blessing of God.

Ever since the legislative elections in February and the presidential elections in March 1991, Benin has been spared the experience of murderous upheavals. Benin is currently evolving in an era of democratic renewal based on a fundamental opposition to arbitrary power, parochialism, tribalism and fanaticism of every stripe. It is a pleasure to note the determination of the people of Benin to create a State of law and democratic pluralism, necessary conditions in which every citizen of Benin can truly flourish on the physical, cultural and spiritual levels. All the planned democratic institutions have been established thanks to the faith and loyalty of President Nicéphore Soglo and his government to the Constitution of 11 December 1990.

It would seem, in the light of events, that the experience of every African country must evolve from local conditions. Outside Benin, some countries have held their national conference. Some have taken another path to democratization leading to a multipartite system and free elections, while others are going through a long, slow process and have yet to achieve democracy. Finally, it should be noted that the path of democratization and respect for human rights had already been taken by a handful of countries before 1988 and has been happily strengthened since then.

I should like to refer to a statement issued by Benin's national union of higher education, which reads in part:

> "The world's situation teaches us that all economic, political, social, cultural and other problems can only be solved through the establishment of true democracy, which implies pluralism. It is because they ignored this fundamental demand of the peoples that various dictatorial regimes, east and west, north and south, failed so miserably."

The dynamics of history, intellectual inventiveness, a thirst for freedom, the aspiration fully to enjoy basic rights, and a wish to emerge from the slavery of underdevelopment have led diverse peoples of the world, and particularly of Africa, resolutely to besiege the fortresses of dictatorship that buttress monolithic regimes and thus to initiate everywhere, with a greater or lesser degree of success, the democratization that will allow humanity to stride proudly into the third millennium of our era.

That is why the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held in Managua from 4 to 6 July 1994, is so meaningful, for it allowed us to evaluate how far we have all come in seeking to overcome our weaknesses, that is, the childhood illnesses of democracy, in order to embark resolutely on a path towards seeking the ways and means of strengthening the process we have begun and to provide a confident future for our peoples.

Democracy can be consolidated only through harmonious economic development without major disruptions, and through sustainable development. Similarly, it cannot be strengthened without durable peace. In other words, democracy, development and peace are indissolubly linked. What we need in the wake of the Managua Conference is to lay the foundations for a true partnership between our various countries, which have launched themselves into this difficult but noble process. We must avoid allowing it to become a regrettable adventure. Many impediments, of course, await us, including those arising from a poor understanding of democracy that leads to anarchy, where the various actors read their parts badly; those induced by the paralysis that often results from the poor functioning of the institutions that are established; those created by the resurgence of old putschist and adventurist tendencies, often engendered by the clash of ambitions; and those that take the form of external threats of destabilization posed by certain anachronistic regimes that feel insecure in the new democratic landscape.

Democracy is not and cannot be an end in itself. It must not only resolve the basic problems of society but also promote the full flowering of the human person by placing heavy emphasis on economic and social development, social justice and the necessary participation of all citizens in the life of their society. We must close ranks to meet the major challenges to which confront democracy can be exposed and which take the form of poverty and all its consequences, and the rise of dangers such as ethnic conflict, illegal drug trafficking, international terrorism, religious fanaticism, the progression of the AIDS pandemic, the ravages of malaria and so on.

The peoples of our various countries are impatient to experience development. That is why we have prepared a consistent and realistic Plan of Action in keeping with their legitimate hopes. The implementation of such a programme, which the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua has just spoken of so eloquently in outlining it, must rest on a real awareness on the part of all Governments and be based on solidarity between all members of the family of which we are now members and, finally — and why not — on generous assistance from the old and more prosperous democracies, as well as on the United Nations system. That leads me to the last point I wish to make before the General Assembly.

The countries I have ventured to refer to as the "old and more prosperous democracies" owe it to themselves to demonstrate a certain amount of political will to guarantee the survival of democracy once and for all in countries which have just restored it or just won it. That presupposes that they must pay particular attention not only to the Plan of Action we drafted at the Managua Conference but also to the national programmes and projects that our Governments will submit to them within the context of economic development or economic recovery. Only respect for the commitments contained in the various international instruments of consensus will contribute to strengthening the democratic process in the countries that have taken this path.

We can also rely on the availability of the United Nations, which has already made a significant contribution to the establishment or restoration of democracy in more than one country, and which can still do much, together with the specialized agencies and subsidiary bodies, to strengthen the emerging or re-emerging democracies by providing them with increased assistance in all areas of their activity.

Perhaps this is the time and place to make a sincere appeal to all the old democracies of the developed world and to the United Nations system to take more seriously the praiseworthy efforts that are being made by the new or restored democracies, as well as the pitiless obstacles that often confront them as they protect and strengthen the democratic process.

Far be it from me to proclaim the idea of claiming "bonuses for democracy", as some malicious people like to say in mocking the generous and spontaneous assistance provided by certain developed countries to emerging or re-emerging democracies. My appeal is rather aimed at establishing the psychological and material conditions for a special partnership, one based on solidarity among the countries that have courageously chosen the difficult and bitter, but noble path of democracy and respect for human dignity.

My delegation is convinced that the greater the geographical area where men and women acquire a true culture of democracy, the greater and more certain will be the realm of lasting and fruitful peace.

Before concluding, I beg the Assembly's indulgence for taking the time to express the satisfaction of the delegation of Benin at the decision of Romania to host in Bucharest the Third International Conference of New and Restored Democracies. This offer augurs well for the rapid consolidation of ties of solidarity among the countries of this family, which has continued to grow since the historic ministerial meeting of the new and restored democracies held in Manila in 1988.

The delegation of Benin is pleased at this new departure for the development and strengthening of democracy throughout the world and the well-being of mankind. Our Assembly's adoption of draft resolution A/49/L.49, introduced by the Permanent Representative of Nicaragua on behalf of a number of delegations, including my own, will be a first step in the right direction.

The meeting rose at 1.10 p.m.

United Nations

A/49/PV.80

General Assembly

Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

80th Meeting
Wednesday, 7 December 1994, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Yassin (Sudan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda item 159 *(continued)*

Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies: draft resolution (A/49/L.49)

Mr. Henze (Germany): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Austria supports this statement.

The Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held at Managua, Nicaragua, from 4 to 6 July this year, adopted two important documents, the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action, which were supported by 74 States. This shows again how deeply the idea of pluralistic democracy has taken root worldwide. The European Union co-financed the work of this important Conference with a contribution of more than $120,000.

The European Union has always supported the evolution towards political pluralism and democracy. That evolution has changed the basis of international relations. Cooperation has replaced confrontation. We share common values of pluralism, the participation of all in political affairs and full respect for human rights, and we support the goal of strengthening and promoting those values. It is in this spirit that we are a co-sponsor of the draft resolution before us.

In Latin America, in the second half of the 1980s one military or dictatorial regime after another began to crumble, and the countries, one after another, began to give themselves constitutional frameworks inspired by the idea of pluralistic democracy. At the end of the 1980s Mr. Gorbachev, in the former Soviet Union, set in motion the process which eventually led to the end of the authoritarian regime. At the end of that process, democracy was installed in the Russian Federation and in other states of the former Soviet Union. Even earlier, countries in Central and Eastern Europe had abolished their one-party systems. One of the results was the peaceful reunification of Germany.

Early in the 1980s the momentum of the democratic idea intensified in Africa, and in Asia the number of countries that have introduced multiparty democracy has increased since the second half of the 1980s.

We in the European Union have followed with great interest and sympathy the democratization process in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa, and we identify with the new or restored democracies.

The European Union's position with regard to the interrelated and mutually reinforcing connections between democracy, human rights and development is well known. We believe that the strengthening of democratic institutions, which guarantee the rule of law, the

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promotion of the values of democracy and respect for human rights, is of paramount importance. We think that those principles not only widen the opportunities for citizens to participate in political decisions but also provide society with an economic impetus.

We are fully aware of the fact that a transition to democracy is not easy. Not only does it require the commitment of political leaders but, more important, it needs the support of the people. In many countries, the change to democratic rule was accompanied by a far-reaching reform of economic structures, which put a burden on the most vulnerable groups of society in particular. In the long run, democracy has to prove that it is the best form of government and that it provides the greatest benefits to all members of society.

In this respect, we are firmly of the belief that economic and social development has greater chances of success in a democracy founded on the rule of law than in a dictatorship in which political and economic decisions cannot be criticized by a parliament or a free press and where the Government is not under pressure to achieve economic success in order to win the next elections. Even where undemocratic regimes pursue sound economic policies, foreign investors might be discouraged because they have no guarantee that such policies will not suddenly be reversed by those regimes. In any case, the issue is not to facilitate governing but to respond to the legitimate wishes and interests of the people. Only a Government elected through universal, equal, free and secret elections can consider itself legitimized to exercise political power.

Here at the United Nations we can witness from day to day how much democratic evolution has changed the character of international relations. In this respect, I should like to point out that living in a community of democracies carries with it certain obligations. Through our participation and commitment we all have to strengthen democracies and help them in their development and in their establishment of a functioning judicial system. The European Union is aware of these obligations. In order to fulfil them, we are ready to help the new or restored democracies in their process towards democratization. I would like to recall that the European Commission is currently making available approximately $50 million for the fostering of democracies. In addition, a number of States members of the European Union are also contributing on a bilateral basis to this end.

On behalf of the European Union and Austria, let me conclude by expressing once again to the Governments and peoples of all new or restored democracies our hope that their efforts to consolidate their democratic systems will succeed. We will assist them in that task.

Mr. Chaves (Kyrgyzstan): It is indeed a signal honour for me to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Kyrgyz Republic on an issue which is not only of the utmost importance but is extremely timely.

The global community, now approaching the twenty-first century, must end the millennium as a human society composed of nations secure in their sovereignty and firmly established in the rule of law and in democratic forms of self-government that provide equality of freedom and opportunity for all. The democratic basics of society presuppose that all the fundamental needs of all of its members are met. Democracy also requires the full participation of citizens in government. The United Nations, as an organization of the global community, has a primary responsibility for the establishment of conditions that eliminate the causes of discrimination, conflict — particularly ethnic conflicts — political and religious tensions, all forms of violence and ultimately war. The survival of democracy in the countries of the world is by no means assured today, and therefore each and every member of the global community has a responsibility for its survival. This responsibility cannot be overemphasized.

In his report, "An agenda for development", the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, made a number of very important proposals, including reorganizing the United Nations system; greater cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and the new World Trade Organization; the urgently needed empowerment of women; the eradication of poverty; and, nearly the most important, the cancellation of the debt of the poorer nations, which weighs so heavily on the budgets of so many nations today. However, his most important proposal was to end the reliance of the United Nations on voluntary contributions to support development efforts. On this crucial issue the Kyrgyz Republic has officially proposed the creation of a United Nations endowment fund. The Ambassador of Nicaragua this morning spoke about his Government's proposed creation of a special fund, with contributions from Governments, for special emergencies. We fully support the proposal of the President of Nicaragua, but our proposal, though complementary, is quite different.

A United Nations endowment fund of no less than $20 billion might offer a possible source of funds to meet emergencies, which are bound to occur each year for different reasons. Such a fund would be established as an international goodwill institution, exclusively funded from private sources and in no way from government contributions. It would be established with its own charter and statutes and be subject to its own international board, elected *in tuito personae* and not as representatives of any country or group of countries. However, all continents would be represented. Such an endowment fund could be recommended and approved by the General Assembly as a response to the urgent statement by the Secretary-General during this session. In order to advance this initiative, a small working group could be set up. A preliminary plan and proposal for the creation of a United Nations endowment fund could be ready in reasonable time. Another method might be to create a United Nations endowment fund as an independent, private foundation to support financially the work of the world Organization. It would function outside the mechanism of the United Nations system, similar to other philanthropic foundations. The income from the fund would be donated to the United Nations.

In addition, the Kyrgyz Republic fully supports the 20/20 initiative for achieving universal access to basic social services for sustainable human development, which has been endorsed by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund. The initiative has universal goals, which we strongly support, and for which we must all work. They include: basic education for all, with a special emphasis on education for women and girls; basic health care for all, including nutrition, reproductive health and family planning services; universal access to safe drinking water and basic sanitary facilities; basic requirements for an acceptable quality of life for all people, including a sustainable livelihood and productive employment; access to credit, land and information for all; adequate shelter; ample participation in governance and decision-making; and full human, political, civil, economic and social rights for all. These are also the requirements of a true democracy.

Draft resolution A/49/L.49 deals with the new or newly re-established democracies. Democracy is a process of constant and laborious achievement. The French philosopher Ernest Renan said that democracy was like a daily plebiscite, the result of the joint efforts of all people. For Hans Kelsen, freedom and equality are the fundamental ideas of democracy. In the mind of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, democracy is the ontological and functional transformation of the subject into a citizen.

It might, nevertheless, be worth while to remember that the "Citizen of Geneva" — as Rousseau signed his *Social Contract*, which had such a great impact on the constitution of so many democracies — also said, "Democracy has never existed and never will".

But we in Kyrgyzstan are convinced that we in the Kyrgyz Republic have a democracy in the best sense of the term. In that sense, we believe, to refer to the immortal words of Abraham Lincoln, that we are a nation, under God, that has had a new birth of freedom and that has a Government of the people, by the people and for the people. We are also conscious that there are other countries in similar situations, experiencing, as we are, increasing difficulties that require and deserve considerable aid. For that aid to be effective, there must be a study and a plan, which must be undertaken at the international level. That is the study and plan on ways and means which the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to undertake.

Therefore, the Kyrgyz Republic, which is co-sponsored the draft resolution and supports it wholeheartedly, expresses the hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Telles Ribeiro (Brazil): Brazil is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution, entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". Having actively participated in both the First and the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, my country is committed to the Conference purposes and shares its ideas with respect to promoting and consolidating representative democracy, with due regard for the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States.

The 1988 Constitution of Brazil clearly defines the political framework on which Brazil is founded: sovereignty, citizenship, the dignity of the human person, the social values of labour and of free enterprise, and political pluralism. In addition, it states that all power emanates from the people, who exercise it through elected representatives or directly.

In Brazil democracy is fully consolidated. We practise a system where concern for the individual lies at the heart of the conscience of society. The actions of my Government are oriented towards ensuring that each and every citizen is provided with effective means to achieve his or her well-being and social justice.

Democracy is the best political system for peoples to seek economic and social development, but it is not sufficient by itself. In a world where the universality of certain values is increasingly pursued, little progress has yet been made on promoting the universality of the right to development. We must focus our efforts on strengthening the solidarity of the international community through the values of democracy, but also on international cooperation for development.

In this context, as stated in the Plan of Action adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in the sister nation of Nicaragua, the new or restored democracies have requested the Secretary-General to undertake a study on the ways in which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments towards consolidation. My delegation very much supports that initiative and hopes that the international community as a whole will join in that request to the Secretary-General.

Mr. Laing (Belize): The delegation of Belize is honoured and pleased to co-sponsor the sponsor the draft resolution.

Until less than a decade ago it was widely perceived that there were far-reaching threats to the older and more established democracies. More recently, however, this perception has waned and so, largely, have intimations of the mortality of those democracies. However, even in relation to those democracies, we have been taught some useful lessons through the outstanding initiative of the International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies, organized, first, by the Philippines and, most recently, by the Republic of Nicaragua.

We were specifically reminded by the Nicaragua Conference that democracy is an organic concept and that it is a fragile commodity. As such, it is exceptionally subject to the slings and arrows of general misfortune in the body politic. We were reminded that, even in established democracies, a declining quality of life spells danger for democracy. We recall that there is a close symbiosis between the formally popular structure on which the institutions of the State are based and the possession by all citizens of the goods, services and amenities of modern civilization. As economic vicissitudes proliferate while we try to reconfigure appropriate strategies for global development, the structure of the democratic order becomes more tenuous. This is accentuated by such phenomena as the extraordinary population explosion and the unstructured and incoherent system of global social order.

Because democracy is a fragile plant which thrives when it is sedulously tended, with adequate resources, the deleterious effects of these phenomena are even more harsh in the new and restored democracies. In many of those States, furthermore, the difficulty of maintaining a fully democratic order is intensified by the problematic effects of the dynamism of the present era. Some of these problems are, paradoxically, attributed to the successes of democracy itself. Thus, refugees and internationally displaced persons in search of democracy, freedom and a better life are attracted by the magnetism of such success. Belize can attest to this as it tries to accommodate the 15 per cent of its population who are such persons.

To some extent, this international migration is stimulated by the instant knowledge conveyed by our modern media and communications technologies. To an extent which we are only just learning, these technologies also contribute to a sometimes crass materialism, which may result in undue diversions of energies and resources and the despair consequent on the lack of fulfilment of burgeoning desires. The evidence is accumulating that these technologies and such diversion and despair contribute to the rapidly growing preoccupation with deadly violence now so rampant in the streets of the vast majority of the cities of the world. The case histories of countries like mine, where television was introduced just over one decade ago, prove the point I am making.

The phenomena of which I speak were unknown before the introduction of television. In that short space of time, things have changed. These technologies have vast potential and are undoubtedly popular. However, instead of functioning as the modern electronic surrogates of the ancient market square and town hall, they contribute to the rapid erosion of security and satisfaction, which are the requisite conditions for democracy.

My delegation contends that the issues relating to democracy and symbiotic economic and social questions all pose serious challenges both for global polity and for the absorptive and managerial capacities of our system of international organization. These problems are fully within the purview of the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and all other relevant bodies of our system.

This system was put in place near the end of the last world war. At that time the gravity and internationalized nature of the challenges induced the realization that the mechanisms of world order needed to be organic and interrelated. Thus, the key instruments of the wartime era which ushered in the current order stressed the symbiosis of economic, political, security and social dimensions. As for democracy itself, those instruments expressed a clear commitment to the exercise by peoples of the right to govern themselves — that is to say, democracy. They also stressed that each individual and community deserved to enjoy the social and economic conditions needed to underpin democracy.

Too often today we hear strong reaffirmations of selected portions of those wartime commitments. The importance of economic orthodoxy is stressed, especially economic liberalism, non-discrimination and adjustment. But insufficient attention is given to the elaboration and enforcement of special and differential trade and development measures and we devise inadequate strategies to reduce the dead weight of debt on States that are poorest or unconscionably burdened. Neither are desperately needed indigenous technological and industrial capabilities being sufficiently stimulated.

In view of the organic nature of these phenomena, they are an incubus on democracy. That fragile plant is even more endangered when, as is often the case, it is not acknowledged that the very models of democracy often have to vary as much as do the broad groupings of people on this planet. Besides, it is insufficiently acknowledged that democracy is merely a species of human rights and that human rights are composed of diverse elements, including those of a cultural, developmental, economic and social nature. We now know that these concerns are not within the exclusive preserve of State jurisdiction. This organic conception of human rights is a proper and full subject of our international system, which is required to act as facilitator, coordinator and even governor. And, as stressed in the Managua Declaration and in current debates in Committees of the Assembly, effective democracy worldwide will be stimulated by more coherent application of democracy in the family of the United Nations.

The delegation of Belize therefore calls upon the Assembly to adopt this noble initiative of the Republic of Nicaragua and to support the enhancement of this valuable commodity in the new or restored democracies.

Mr. Valencia Rodriguez (Ecuador) *(interpretation from Spanish):* My delegation is pleased that the General Assembly has agreed to include this additional item on its agenda and that it is discussing the item today. This is a question of particular importance to the international community. My delegation therefore supports the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua from 4 to 6 July 1994.

We must use as a point of departure the widely acknowledged belief that democracy is now the form of government that best meets the needs of peoples and guarantees their development. I need not recall that various ways have been chosen to adapt to the traditional and historical characteristics of various cultures and civilizations. We acknowledge that there cannot be a single form of democracy that can be applied indiscriminately to all peoples. Democracy is a concept that evolves continuously in response to the requirements of politics and history. No country, even those that boast that they are the representatives of the best-structured and oldest democracies, can point to the democratic system that could be regarded as the most perfect. Political, economic and social vicissitudes, from which no country is exempt, have frequently led to the suspension or weakening of democratic institutions.

In those conditions, the promotion and consolidation of democracy has been a rather difficult, and sometimes even a traumatic and painful, process. Even today we see many examples of this.

While there is no single model of democracy that can be universally applied, there are none the less fundamental values that can be emphasized as a foundation for the process to which I have just referred.

First, there is an extricable link between the supreme values of democracy and freedom. The only basis for true democracy and political pluralism is the will of the people, freely expressed, in all sovereignty, at the ballot box. This implies full respect for the essential characteristics of the human being, the unrestricted rule of law and the total application of the principle of the equality of all before the law. It follows from this that all discriminatory practices, for any reason or on whatever pretext, are prohibited.

The promotion of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are also a *sine qua non* for a truly democratic system. In this connection, we must emphasize the principle of self-determination — that is, the right of peoples freely to choose their own economic, political and social system and to make proper, rational and sovereign use of their natural resources.

Democracy also entails raising the living standards of societies that find themselves totally unprotected. Thus the struggle against abject poverty must be a joint effort on the part of Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. The war on poverty also implies ensuring broad access to education, culture and health care as well as providing better employment opportunities for all. The World Summit for Social Development especially will be called on to play an important role in this connection.

While Latin America now presents a broad and optimistic picture of representative democracy, that system none the less has undergone serious upheavals, interruptions and changes. Aside from the elements I mentioned earlier, which in Latin America frequently did not come to fruition or suffered regrettable setbacks, there exists another threat to democratic stability: subversion. In some countries, this phenomenon is particularly dangerous. It should be made entirely clear that some forms of subversion, which might be considered to be terrorism, with all its consequences, imperil the fundamental rights of the human person and jeopardize democracy and the maintenance of peace.

To this we must add the serious phenomena resulting from criminal drug-trafficking and the near-institutionalized corruption that exists, which, in some cases, is undermining the very moral and economic foundations of society.

This once again leads us to recall the fundamental link between the promotion of democracy, sustainable development and peace. These concepts are closely interrelated, and progress must therefore jointly be made on all of them. There can be no doubt that development is a guarantee of the full exercise of democracy.

To sum up, we believe that promoting and consolidating democracy should be achieved on the basis of respect for the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and strict adherence to the commitments entered into by Governments under international instruments, particularly with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the lofty goal of promoting and consolidating democracy requires solidarity and a considerable and sustained effort on the part of the international community. This goal can be most consistently and harmoniously achieved through existing United Nations machinery.

Mr. Kaikobad (Pakistan): We live in an age where the democratic ideal is increasingly triumphant. The long and arduous struggles of peoples have culminated in the attainment of democracy in regions all over the world. Democratic polities have dramatically increased in numbers. Tyranny and authoritarianism appear to be nightmares of the past.

These are times for rejoicing, and yet there is a deep sense of foreboding - an all-pervasive anxiety that the recent, hard-won democratic victories might be reversed. The reason for this lies in the fact that the new or restored democracies face grave challenges in the way of consolidating their systems. There is a danger that some of these democracies might be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problems confronting them.

The new democracies are threatened on two fronts. Many are faced with a hostile security environment, and all are beset with harsh economic conditions. On both fronts, the United Nations system can take measures to help these nascent democracies.

Threats to security are a direct threat to democracy. To ensure that a democratic polity is able to develop and flourish, it is essential that threats to its security are addressed and removed. The continuing tragedy of Bosnia offers a vivid example of a democracy struggling to cope with an extremely adverse security environment. In essence, the situation in Bosnia is quite simple. A multicultural, democratic State has become the victim of fascist aggression. Instead of being helped to resist aggression, the Bosnian Government has seen its ability to defend itself restricted. Instead of international law being upheld and Serbian aggression vacated, the aggressors are being rewarded with plans that seek to preserve their territorial gains.

The United Nations could play an important role in protecting and preserving a democratic State. No dramatic measures are required. All that is needed is for the United Nations to uphold the principles enshrined in its Charter: the aggressors should be punished, and the aggressed should be allowed the means to defend themselves.

In our own region, the democratic process is threatened by the situation in Indian-occupied Jammu and

Kashmir. In complete violation of United Nations resolutions, the people of Kashmir have been denied their basic right to self-determination. Their struggle to exercise this right is being crushed with extreme brutality. The over-600,000-strong Indian occupation force incarcerates, tortures and even at times rapes Kashmiris with impunity. Unable to crush the indomitable Kashmiri people and their spirit, the Indian forces also adopt a threatening posture towards Pakistan. There are incessant violations of the line of control by the Indian forces. There are also bellicose statements by the Indian leadership. Recently, Prime Minister Rao threatened to send his forces to take over Azad Kashmir. Such threats are made in the vain expectation that Pakistan will be cowed into muting its voice in support of the rights of the Kashmiris. The constant Indian threat of the use of force exacts a heavy toll on our polity. Resources have to be diverted from development activities for defence, and the people are constrained to postpone their hopes for a better future.

The United Nations can play a vital role in strengthening the democratic dispensation in South Asia. It can do so by seeking an immediate halt to the gross violations of human rights in Kashmir. Equally important, the United Nations needs to initiate efforts to urgently resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with its own resolutions.

Besides ensuring security, the United Nations has a key role to play in alleviating the economic difficulties faced by the new or restored democracies. The establishment of democratic structures quite naturally raises people's expectations that their material conditions would improve quickly and substantially. Such expectations are not easy to fulfil. The new democratic Governments inherit economies that are mismanaged, grossly inefficient and geared to benefit a privileged minority. To set these economies on the right track, difficult decisions have to be taken, wasteful subsidies have to be withdrawn, market forces allowed to operate, and competition introduced. These decisions, while increasing productivity, tend to hurt the more vulnerable segments of society.

Despite a willingness to take tough decisions, many democratic Governments have not been able to ensure economic growth. This is primarily due to an international economic environment that impedes sustained growth. Decreasing capital inflows, crippling debt burdens, restricted markets for exports and adverse terms of trade impact negatively on economic growth regardless of the boldness of decisions taken by the democratic Governments.

Lack of significant growth aggravates the tensions that invariably exist in societies that are undergoing social and political change. These tensions can manifest themselves in divisive politics based on narrow ethnic and sectarian considerations. Once unleashed, such tendencies are difficult to reverse and can pose dangers to newly established democratic institutions.

The role of the United Nations system in such a situation is quite clear. The United Nations must ensure that the global economic environment is conducive to the growth of all States. An essential prerequisite for achieving this is to develop mechanisms within the system that would allow all States to play a meaningful role in the formulation of macroeconomic policy. This would result in more equitable and constructive policies on the key issues of capital flows, debt and trade.

In addition to the larger task of creating a favourable external economic environment, the United Nations needs to assist the democracies in lessening the negative impact of economic restructuring programmes. The United Nations financial and development agencies should help the democratic Governments to put in place social safety nets to soften the impact of economic readjustment on the most vulnerable segments of society. Contrary to what is sometimes asserted, this would not be an economically wasteful measure. It would prevent the alienation of peoples from the democratic process. It would also deprive demagogues of grounds to exploit the people for their own ends. Thus, it would contribute to social stability and consequently ensure proper conditions for economic growth.

The restoration of a number of democracies and the emergence of many new ones provides an historic opportunity for creating an irreversible trend in favour of the democratic ideal. The United Nations system, by addressing key security and economic issues and thereby consolidating the nascent democratic polities can contribute immeasurably to this trend. This would ensure that the next century begins with a world confident that the factors inimical to democracies have been contained and even vanquished.

Mr. Martinez Blanco (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The item before us today — which was considered in depth at the International Conferences convened on this subject in Manila, the Philippines, in June 1988 and Managua, Nicaragua, in July 1994 — deserves the Assembly's particular interest, as the new democracies are an integral part of political processes and processes of reconciliation and development in national societies and of peace and security in the international community, within a concept of greater and more unified security.

As indicated in the 15 November 1994 explanatory memorandum which the sponsors of the draft resolution submitted to the President of the General Assembly when they requested the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the forty-ninth session for consideration in this plenary session, in the Managua Declaration, the Conference, composed of 74 States, expressed:

> "the conviction that a sound democratic and pluralistic system based on the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations and in international covenants and conventions on human rights is closely linked to the implementation of policies aimed at promoting sustainable development ... and equal opportunities" and that "In order to achieve the objectives put forward by the Conference, the Plan of Action drew attention to the need to work out and strengthen at the bilateral and multilateral level modalities for international cooperation that take into account the various realities of the new or restored democracies, in order to strengthen democracy and peace with development." (*A/49/236, paras. 4-5*)

To return to these concepts, my delegation reiterates the view that the United Nations system should support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, of which there are many in the international community and this world Organization.

None of these new or restored democracies is free of problems, be they political, economic, social or other kinds. That is why, if they do not receive the appropriate support, many of them will, unfortunately, have to face serious problems that could further impair the peace and security that should prevail internationally. The United Nations must therefore be a more active protagonist in the promotion and strengthening of these new democracies, giving them the support they need for their development. This support should be not only economic but also technical and institutional, as required. The United Nations has already successfully demonstrated its expertise and efficiency in this area, by means of which it could increase its expertise and efficiency with optimum results in those regions of the world that desperately need its assistance.

When we see with great sadness that many of the new or restored democracies are experiencing economic and social difficulties; that their meagre development is stagnant or shrinking; that they have tremendous debts which they cannot pay because of a lack of resources; and that their creditors, be they Governments of developed countries or international credit institutions, are imposing conditions that further slow their growth and development, we are drawn to the immediate conclusion that those Governments and institutions could help to alleviate the painful situation of these less fortunate countries. Humanizing international credit, revising the external debt and paying a fair price for our export products are, *inter alia*, some measures that could contribute to a partial solution to these problems.

That is why I wish to express the support of the delegation of Honduras for the draft resolution in document A/49/L.49, entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies", under agenda item 159. The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General, from within existing resources, to study the ways and mechanisms in which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, and to submit a comprehensive report thereon to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. The maintenance of international peace and security deserves all this and more.

Mr. Illueca (Panama) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Panama has a historic position on the agenda item concerning the promotion and consolidation of new or restored democracies, dating from the meeting of the Amphictionic Congress convened by the Liberator, Simon Bolivar in 1826 on the Isthmus of Panama. At that meeting the Latin American republics that had recently become independent of Spain organized, in the Treaty of Union, League and Confederation against domestic despots and foreign domination. The Protocols of the Congress of Panama contained the fundamental principles of unity and integration in Latin America. Those Congresses were clear precursors of this world Organization.

It is therefore easy to understand the decisive contribution that the Contadora Group — Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela — meeting on Panamanian territory, has made to peace in Central America. Those countries worked with the fraternal democracies of the Southern Cone and the Southern Pacific towards the creation of the Rio Group, which today constitutes a dynamic and constructive force in international relations both in our hemisphere and throughout the world.

In our view, there exists a set of ideals and purposes shared by the Rio Group, the Ibero-American Summit and the Hemispheric Summit convened by President Clinton this week in Miami, in favour of contributing to Governments' efforts to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

The draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.49 follows up on the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action adopted by the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua from 4 to 6 July 1994.

My country, as a co-sponsor of this draft resolution, would urge that it be adopted unanimously without a vote.

The delegation of Panama considers that its main purpose in speaking in this discussion is to inform the General Assembly of the democratic origin of the Government of our country that came into office on 1 September last.

President Ernesto Pérez Balladares, who was elected in free and fair elections, stated upon taking office:

> "This is the new face that Panama is showing to its friends abroad. We are no longer at the stage of seeking solidarity for the Canal Treaty or the recovery of the use of our geographical location. We wish now to participate in a new world, which challenges us all, to inform others of the potential of our geographical location. We want to use all opportunities open to us to apply, with decency, justice and respect, a strong, forceful foreign policy free from complexes, a policy that will enable us to meet the challenges of the coming century. We are the friends of all; we are the enemy of none."

Another reason for making this statement is to demonstrate our belief that no better tribute can be paid to democracy than to continue to discuss it, and to do so in a democratic way. This ongoing discussion will some day enable the United Nations to discover the secret of what makes for democratic stability, or democratic imperfection, or the breakdown of democracy — in a word, all the features of democracy.

Like any political concept, the concept of democracy presupposes a science, a knowledge of mankind. Nothing about democracy can be understood if we forget that inherent in it is a concern, a search for a policy that is devised for mankind, a way of perfecting rather than corrupting mankind. When politics becomes the art of forging shackles to subject man rather than the art of liberating him from his needs by satisfying them, who can say exactly what freedom means? This has been the subject of discussion through the ages, but remains relevant because it is a discussion about inequality among peoples, among men, among States.

The United Nations promotes democracy because we know that the benefits of democracy are universal and that inherent in democracy are the ingredients of a harmonious and peaceful vision of life and society. When promoting democracy, the United Nations is aware of the symbolic importance of democracy, as well as of its real importance in the attainment of the goals of peace, justice, development and social integration.

The United Nations, by becoming better able to place itself in the historical perspective of the present and the future, has made a considerable contribution to redefining what the present and the future demand of us. It has discovered that it must prepare the international community for a new social compact, one that we hope will be given concrete form at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in March 1995.

Mrs. Lopez Villatoro (Guatemala) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: My delegation is convinced that anything that can be done to strengthen national democratic systems deserves the recognition and resolute support of the international community.

As a Central American, I accord all due significance to the flowering of the democracy that we now have a good chance of witnessing in all the countries of Central America.

Our satisfaction at this fortunate situation is commensurate with the tremendous efforts and sacrifices required to achieve it.

Above and beyond the strictly political sphere, the compelling need to alleviate hunger, mass poverty, deficiencies in education, disease and social injustice continues to be the principal challenge facing us. It is not always easy to attack these evils in a context of strict respect for all democratic principles. However, if this is done, we shall not only guarantee that the social transformations that are necessary if underdevelopment is to be overcome are not to the detriment of democracy; we shall also ensure democracy's full validity. Democracy does not have just a political dimension; it has economic, social and cultural aspects too.

If one addresses merely its political dimension, one must add that democracy is not simply a system for the free and regular election of leaders but also a means of ensuring sustained, general participation in decision-making and of curbing the arbitrary use of power. This machinery cannot function effectively if it is not used in conjunction with respect for all human rights.

The political will of the Central American peoples to build peace, abandoning once and for all an era of violent conflicts caused by the cold war as well as by domestic disputes, was reflected in the agreements entered into by the Central American Presidents, which included an appeal to international institutions to support this process. As a result of these agreements, our countries, States and participating organizations, particularly those in the United Nations system, have not only contributed resources but also taken innovative and effective measures to build and consolidate peace in the region.

This has demonstrated that our nations cannot progress outside the international community. Closely related to our efforts to overcome the obstacles to the strengthening of our democratic institutions are duties that must be performed to ensure world wide respect for human rights and to ensure conditions that are conducive to the promotion of our democratic objectives.

It is vitally important to our countries that the international community and its institutions take into account the peculiarities of the complex situation of new or restored democracies, where many of the pressures threatening democracy result from the very struggle to obtain democracy and from the expectations of immediate satisfaction that the word stirs in those who have long felt impassive, thus causing disappointment if these are not speedily satisfied. Such frustrations, as well as making an unfavourable impact on Governments, can give anti-democratic forces an opportunity to come into play. This is why, without denying freedom to the enemies of freedom, we must none the less be vigilant and take care to ensure that the tender buds growing from the seeds of democracy in our countries do not succumb to the aggression perpetrated by anti-democratic forces.

In the new international setting, multilateralism has regained impetus and is making an increased contribution to the solution of problems whose continued existence might imperil the validity of democracy. My country can testify to this. United Nations bodies have contributed effectively to helping our Governments to strengthen democratic institutions, enforce the rule of law, conclude successfully negotiations concerning the firm desire for reconciliation between Guatemalans and repatriate thousands of our compatriots who, during the years of violence, sought refuge abroad.

But we must do still more to consolidate democracy in our country and, thereby, complete a process that cannot be successful unless secure and true peace reigns. This is why we hope that the United Nations, through the recently established United Nations Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), will continue to contribute, directly or indirectly, to securing a prompt conclusion to negotiations aimed at bringing a speedy and definitive end to the domestic armed conflict that has plagued Guatemala during more than 30 years of struggle which is as tragic as it is pointless.

The delegation of Guatemala believes that the important draft resolution, which was introduced so eloquently by the Ambassador of Nicaragua and is sponsored by 60 countries, will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Cardenas (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish):* It gives my delegation real satisfaction to speak on the topic of the support that the United Nations can provide for the efforts of some Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

As we did in July, when the Argentine Republic, together with the 73 other States, participated in the Second International Conference on this question, we support this priority task. The Conference to which I refer took place in the capital city of Managua as a follow-up to what took place in Manila in June 1988.

From this rostrum my Government reaffirms its unswerving and unequivocal commitment to democracy and freedom. It must be understood that democracy, individual freedoms and human rights have a close relationship that makes them the three central pillars of modern development which does not overlook the human being.

Political democracy is far from being a luxury for rich peoples. Rather, it is an urgent necessity for poor countries — something without which it would be difficult to direct the voice of the people to the authorities or to eliminate corruption. It would also be difficult to remedy abuses or to remove incompetent leaders. But when Governments are weakened by arrogance, frivolity or lack of understanding, they lose the trust and the support of their peoples and — at the polls they are replaced in the orderly fashion and with the stability that only democracy can provide, for in the veins of democracy run the very antibodies that protect it from excessive behaviour. There is no real democracy where it is impossible to express the popular will in universal elections in which pluralism is respected.

Since the end of the cold war, and since the grand utopia that for decades had attempted to pervert the very notion of democracy collapse along with the Berlin wall, it is clear that democracy has gradually become the ideal to be achieved and a growing reality throughout the world.

In Latin America the 1980s were known as the "lost decade". The 1990s are beginning to be known as the "decade of Latin America". In all corners, events are illustrating the widespread commitment to a new model based on democracy and freedom.

In addition, in the particular case of Central America it is becoming clear that peace is an essential component of development, and it cannot be repeated too often that without development, peace and democracy are inevitably vulnerable to attack.

Democracy is important because it makes it possible for individuals to enjoy the full exercise of their freedoms, is incompatible with terror and does not allow the State to crush the individual. To that end, we have not only the formal institutions that characterize a democracy, but also freedom of information, which is able to penetrate the walls behind which power, in all its forms, sometimes hides its lack of respect for human rights.

In the framework of democracy and of the freedom that it generates and guarantees, initiative flourishes, and the opportunities that derive from both political and economic freedom are maximized for everyone.

Strictly speaking, the modern formula of development is based upon the pillars of democracy and the market, as well as upon the responsibilities that in that formula are incumbent upon the State, which must guarantee for society as a whole, the equilibrium that prevents inequity from emerging and flourishing.

However, democracy does not automatically mean perfection. It is nothing more and nothing less than the best and fairest path. It provides more opportunities and, despite the risks, offers the greatest rewards because it accepts diversity, does not impose homogeneity, allows for creativity, makes it possible to reward effort, unmasks authoritarianism and, above all, is an instrument of respect and a vehicle of tolerance.

Democracy also implies acceptance of diversity. Hence, it makes it possible to leave behind obsessions with equality, which destroy initiative, nullify character, distort liberty and alienate consciences. Those obsessions always end in failure because they lack political logic and economic sense and because justice and arithmetics are not and never will be synonymous.

Democracy must be constructed step by step and must always be preserved, in a slow process along a timeless road that, like so many others, is built as one travels on it.

Those who lived in the darkness of democracy's absence need the encouragement of those who, on the other hand, have enjoyed it for so long, have made of it the backbone of their character and therefore have the duty to promote its dissemination. It is precisely they, individually or as a group, who can help to straighten pathways and, in solidarity, help to reduce the cost of transition or ensure that the benefits of democracy come soon to those who go on striving, even though they lack the most basic resources.

Not so long ago in Managua we agreed to ask the Secretary-General to undertake study on the ways in which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate the restored democracies. That is why we are here: that objective remains a priority for us. For this reason the Argentine Republic supports and co-sponsors with total conviction the draft resolution before us today.

Mr. Castaneda Cornejo (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In 1988, when the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies was held in Manila, international relations, despite the changes that had taken place, still reflected the confrontational character of the cold-war period. In world politics there existed a dynamic making it impossible to define the world panorama. Fear and mistrust of advancing and deepening the process of the democratization of international society persisted.

In 1994, after six short years, there have been profound transformations that have changed the geopolitical map of the world. Events in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, resulting in new State configurations, as well as those in other nations that achieved their independence or formally attained statehood and were formally admitted as full-fledged Members of the United Nations, came about through expression of the aspirations of their respective peoples, which were finally able to exercise their rights to independence, self-determination and their own national, cultural, ideological, religious and other identities and to forge their own destiny within a broad concept of democracy. Regrettably, in most of these cases progress has not been made in consolidating that broad concept because of the resurgence of various types of old antagonisms between several of those new State entities.

In an international context in which conflicts and problems of global interest have increased substantially and the United Nations has taken on more responsibilities and faces greater demands to provide responses and find solutions, not only to political problems but also to priority economic and social problems, the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies was held in Nicaragua from 4 to 6 July this year. The Conference's fundamental objective was to reaffirm the importance and effectiveness of representative democracy as a system of government and to examine the progress, obstacles and prospects of the new democracies at the national, regional and global levels.

Allow me to make special mention of the democratization process in Central America, especially in El Salvador.

Since before the 1980s, Central America had begun to suffer the effects of a deep political, economic and social crisis that came about precisely because national societies had developed within a system of limited democracy — in particular, because social programmes were not formulated or executed, a doctrine of national security was promoted, political arenas were closed and civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights were violated in one way or another. The international changes, especially the new structure of world power, had their effects on the region's critical situation, creating conditions that made possible and viable the transition from confrontation to peace, the consolidation of democracy, and sustainable development.

Esquipulas II — "The procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America — adopted in Guatemala in 1987, is an agreement in which our Presidents decided to take a direct role in searching for political solutions to the Central American crisis and to join forces in order to achieve peace, democracy and development through the adoption of measures and programmes to overcome its causes. The execution of those agreements was facilitated by the dynamic and changing international situation, which has resulted in the end of armed conflicts and the process of consolidating peace and democracy in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Negotiations continue in Guatemala to resolve that country's political and social problems and to initiate a process of maintaining and consolidating peace.

In the case of El Salvador, as we have indicated on other occasions, the crisis of the 1980s and its causes were similar to the situation that existed in other developing countries. With regard to the serious Salvadorian problem, I would refer to the fifth paragraph of our statement in the Security Council on 23 November, during the discussion of the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), in which we said:

> "In considering the magnitude of the crisis experienced in El Salvador, we must look at the past. The crisis was not born out of thin air; its origins and evolution were the results of longstanding and profound social, political, economic and cultural imbalances. One negative aspect of our national life was the scarcity of forums and mechanisms for exercising ideological pluralism and respect for partisan coexistence, which hindered the full development of a democratic system." *(S/PV.3465, p. 2-3)*

It is important to point out that in El Salvador there was in parallel with the armed conflict a political attempt to open a dialogue and create opportunities for negotiations between the parties to the conflict, a process that grew stronger and more dynamic after 1990. That was when we asked the Secretary-General to mediate in the search for political solutions and the achievement of peace by peaceful means, as well as in the adoption of measures to bring about the reunification and rebuilding of the country on democratic principles, particularly respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As the international community is aware, the Agreement signed at Chapultepec, Mexico, in January 1992 put an end to the armed conflict in El Salvador, marking the conclusion of the first phase of the peace process but the beginning of a complex and difficult period of transition during which the commitments made served as the framework for a developing political, economic and social process, which we are convinced will culminate in the consolidation of democracy.

It is important to emphasize the role played by the United Nations, both through the Secretary-General and his representatives and through the international machinery set up to verify and contribute to the maintenance and consolidation of the peace process in Central America: the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), the International Support and Verification Commission established in conjunction with the Organization of American States (CIAV/OAS) and the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL). We should also stress the support of friendly countries directly interested in the region, particularly those that have cooperated, and continue to cooperate, with the Secretary-General in the search for political solutions, and those that have provided technical and financial assistance for the implementation of special programmes of cooperation designed to supplement the peace efforts by attacking the structural causes of our problems and strengthening the democratic process.

International support was very important — indeed, indispensable — in consolidating democracy, and it has played a special role in the United Nations work on the ground in Central America, which has not only contributed to verifying compliance with commitments entered into and to the maintenance and consolidation of peace, but has also acted as a deterrent to elements likely to destabilize the peace process and the consolidation of democracy.

Notwithstanding the progress made, we must recognize that democracy is fragile, particularly if the priority problems of society are not dealt with. These include the need to improve the difficult social conditions of large sectors of the population, conditions which could at any moment endanger the advances already made.

Given these considerations and the importance of finding new ways and means to avoid a recurrence of this tragic period in Salvadorian life, El Salvador participated in the First and Second International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies, convinced that the democratic system in all its dimensions is the only system by which societies can achieve dialogue and reconciliation, maintain the necessary stability and realize sustainable development, which, in turn, can contribute to strengthening international peace and security. That is especially true if at the same time there is a democratization of international relations in which equal rights are enjoyed by all States members of the international community; that would be a positive factor for promoting and consolidating the era of international solidarity and cooperation that will characterize the so-called new international order.

El Salvador, convinced of the need to exchange experiences and adopt effective complementary measures to consolidate democracy, supports and agrees with the provisions of the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies. In this connection, we support the decision adopted at that Conference to request the Secretary-General to submit, in accordance with established procedures, a report on how the Organization could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, a request reflected in draft resolution A/49/L.49, of which we are a sponsor.

In conclusion, I should like to say that we understand the Organization's financial problems, which stand in contrast to the increased demands on it and its old and new responsibilities. In addition, although the Charter does not spell out the concept of democracy, we understand its Preamble and its purposes and principles to contain the basic principles of democracy at all levels. For the United Nations to be effective and meet the hopes and expectations of nations, Member States must give it all the political support it requires and meet their financial obligations, so as to provide it with the resources it needs to make the principles and purposes of the Charter a reality for "We the peoples of the United Nations". I am thinking in particular of the promotion of social progress and raising the standard of living, within a broader concept of freedom. We believe that this is in line with the new development strategy and the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development, priority items in our Organization's agenda, and a new concept to lead to the realization of the provisions of the Charter.

Mr. Berrocal Soto (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Costa Rica attaches great importance to this agenda item, and we sincerely thank the delegation of the sister Republic of Nicaragua, and especially Ambassador Erich Vilchez, for the care and diligence with which they have brought to the Assembly's attention the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the Second

International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held from 4 to 6 July 1994.

Prince Sisowath Sirirath (Cambodia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

These documents make an extraordinarily well-thought-out and thought-provoking contribution to the work of the United Nations as this millennium draws to a close, and in the context of the current international situation. Still more than that, in the view of my country it would be difficult to conceive of a more ambitious or expedient programme, than the one set forth in the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action, a programme that is commensurate with the greatest and deepest aspirations of the peoples of the world, in the four corners of the globe, without exception.

Costa Rica is an ancient and well-established democracy with more than 100 years of experience of a system embodying public and private freedoms. Since the end of the nineteenth century — in other words, more than half a century before the establishment of the United Nations — those who govern us have been elected every four years by secret ballot in free elections under a multiparty system that effectively and comprehensively guarantees the free and sovereign expression of the will of the people and full respect for the fundamental rights of all of its citizens without distinction as to ideology, policy, sex, race or religion. Since 1948 we have been a democracy with neither weapons nor army, and now, only a few years before the end of the twentieth century, we are involved in one of the most ambitious and widely acknowledged programmes, world wide, to preserve the environment and protect nature and biodiversity. The transformation of our national development process and our international relations into a plan for sustainable development is our current national goal, and to this end we are working actively with the fraternal countries of Central America and with the support of the international community.

These credentials, a source of legitimate pride to all Costa Ricans of all political and religious persuasions, are not however enough. Nor are they enough for other century-old and exemplary democracies also represented in this General Assembly. The democratic system is, by definition, a perfectible process and therefore, over time the building and developing of a society and country that enjoys freedom and ensures strict respect for the law is a daily obligation and responsibility of all citizens and of the bodies that represent them. This is equally true in the economic and social sphere, and with regard to the constant modernization and honing of democratic institutions, governance, control of the exercise of political power, full and absolute respect for human rights and the daily exercise of such rights and obligations on the part both of those who govern and of those who are governed.

This is why the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action are an inspiration and a call on us to work together and in true international cooperation, both North-South and South-South. By this positive and necessary sharing of experience, cooperation is enhanced and encouraged by the conceptual differences in views on the organization as such and the functioning of democratic institutions themselves, considered in the context of parliamentary systems in the style of European democracies or presidential systems as we understand democracy in America, in the context of the juridical traditions and legal systems of Roman, French or Anglo-Saxon inspiration, or the even more ancient and original slant of the age-old cultures of Asia. These universal sources of inspiration are part of the common heritage of mankind, which can and indeed must be shared in order to support and encourage democratic processes in the so-called new or restored democracies, to strengthen the system of public and private freedoms, to consolidate and refine the electoral processes and systems, or control over political power, and the separation of the powers of the State, in each and every one of the democratic countries that make up the United Nations.

But this sharing of experience and this programme of cooperation, as pointed out in the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action, must transcend the sphere of conceptual criteria and value judgements on the democratic system and freedom, as opposed to totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, of the left or of the right, fundamentalist or religious, or merely the result of military or populist ambitions. This exercise must go beyond rhetoric. The concerted efforts of the international community must be directed towards, and must lead to, concrete programmes of action and the consolidation of an effective platform for international cooperation, with the support of the Secretariat and the agencies of the United Nations system, and also those of the developed countries and world or regional financial bodies for international cooperation. People are tired of words and good intentions. The time has come for action. It is time to work together, effectively, to consolidate and entrench the spirit of freedom which has transformed the democratic system, in these closing years of the twentieth century, and made it into the supreme system of coexistence between people and between nations.

The establishment of a trust fund to support the promotion and consolidation of new or restored democracies would mark a positive and inspiring step forward in this direction which is the sign of the times.

If this were to happen, as called for in and inspired by the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action, then we would be working, more than in many other fields of action and international cooperation, for the development and the consolidation of the noble principles and objectives which, fifty years ago, inspired the signing of the San Francisco Charter and the very establishment of the United Nations.

In keeping with these principles, Costa Rica supports and has joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/49/L.49, on agenda item 159, entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". We are certain that this is fully in keeping with the age-old democratic history and tradition of Costa Rica. Costa Rica hopes also that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus as a tribute to all those countries represented in the General Assembly on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, to be commemorated in 1995.

Mr. Ayalon (Israel): At the outset, I wish to express our appreciation to Nicaragua for its initiative in bringing this issue before the General Assembly. We were proud to support this initiative from the beginning.

We are pleased to see that a growing number of States are recognizing the fundamental relationship between democracy, development, peace, security and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Democratization is not only a moral issue: it is tied directly to the establishment of peace and stability. The existence of a democratic government is the central guarantee for preventing policies of violence and aggression. Never has one democracy made war upon another. This is not the result of chance. Rather, it stems from the very nature of democratic government, which puts people's destinies in their own hands, and is attentive to the people's yearnings for peace and prosperity.

Openness and participation also encourage sustainable development. Democratic societies produce pluralistic, open and enterprising economies, and therefore they enjoy the highest standard of living in the world.

The growing number of countries that are embracing democratic principles is one of the most positive developments of our time. But we must not grow complacent. Democracies are still a minority among the States Members of the United Nations, and the dangers they face from within and from without are still formidable. The process of democratization is a long one that must be nurtured and protected if it is to bear fruit. It is dependent upon courageous leadership and the development of grass-roots support.

Therefore, it is appropriate for the United Nations to support the efforts of the Governments of new or restored democracies. The international community should promote the development of democratic political cultures by instilling democratic values in the people, especially in the young. Education for democracy should be a never-ending process that encourages citizens to be informed and active participants in the noble task of government. Economic assistance is also crucial to buttress democratic reforms and to ensure the viability of young democratic institutions. We are certain that the report of the Secretary-General which will be submitted to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session will give the highest priority to the requested support from the United Nations system.

Israel is encouraging democratization with deeds. For this purpose we responded to the request of the United Nations and sent a group of observers to the first free, all-race elections in South Africa. We also answered the call of the United Nations by sending observers to monitor the elections in Mozambique. In addition, at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua last July, we offered to sponsor an international course on democratic administration. This course will address such subjects as the holding of elections, checks and balances, education for democracy, and other subjects which will enhance the democratic process. We are pleased that plans for the course are proceeding apace.

Israel has also suggested to the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations that it consider including an event marking the contribution of democracy to world peace.

Israel is pleased to have been among the sponsors at this session of a number of draft resolutions supporting democratization. We view this as an expression of the importance we attach to the issue, as well as a signal of our readiness to cooperate with the international community in providing assistance to new and restored democracies throughout the world. Accordingly, we have joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/49/L.49 and look forward to its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Motsyk (Ukraine) (*interpretation from Russian*): The delegation of Ukraine welcomes the inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, at the initiative of Nicaragua, of the item entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". We were among the sponsors of that initiative, and are co-sponsors of the draft resolution (A/49/L.49) on the item.

In our view, it is both important and timely to consider the question of promotion and consolidation of new or restored democracies. New or restored democracies constitute a significant proportion of the international community, and their fate will to a large extent determine the course of world history as a whole and will define tomorrow's world and what mankind will take with it into the twenty-first century.

In that connection, the delegation of Ukraine conveys its gratitude to the Government of the Philippines, which organized the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, for the idea of an exchange of experiences among States that are new or restored democracies. The two International Conferences that have been held — in the Philippines in 1989 and in Nicaragua in 1994 — demonstrated the indubitable usefulness of discussing the problems of new or restored democracies, and showed that the Conference, where States of all regional groups are represented, is gradually acquiring a clearer organizational framework. We think it would be useful to continue this activity in the future.

The delegation of Ukraine wishes to express particular gratitude to the Government and the people of Nicaragua for their excellent organization of the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held in Managua from 4 to 6 July 1994. It provided an opportunity to engage in a constructive and productive exchange of views and to formulate and adopt by consensus two important documents: the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action. The delegation of Ukraine participated in the work of the Conference and played a very active part in formulating the texts of those two documents.

In our view, the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action constitute a programme for new or restored democracies in their efforts to consolidate the democratic course they have chosen. The provisions of the two documents include a comprehensive set of tasks that must be carried out by States building a democratic society for the first time or restoring democracy after a period of totalitarian rule.

I shall not attempt a detailed analysis of the Managua documents. My delegation wishes merely to touch on the elements that we view as key provisions. We agree with the statement in the Declaration that democracy is the best way to achieve human and social development. We also believe that a solid, democratic and pluralism system is closely linked to sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life of all sectors of the population, particularly the lower-income sectors. Wherever development is sustainable, democracy is strengthened; conversely, a decline in the rate of development or an economic slump threatens democratic institutions.

Here special attention must be given to the special situation of States that came into being on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Their situation cannot be equated with the situation of other post-Communist States. The main difference is that in the States of the former Soviet Union there was not only a lack of true democracy but also a lack of private property, and the market mentality was almost completely destroyed. These countries, including Ukraine, must therefore make a twofold transition: from totalitarianism to democracy, and from a centralized economy to a market economy. In Ukraine, moreover, that twofold problem is compounded by the enormous burden of the Chernobyl catastrophe and the multi-billion-dollar cost of destroying nuclear weapons and converting the military industry we inherited.

One of the factors that are seriously impeding the development of the democratic processes in the world is the outbreak of conflicts. We share the general concern at the bloody conflicts that are still raging and we support the appeal contained in the Managua Declaration for peaceful, political solutions. Of great importance to us is paragraph 25 of the Declaration, which states that

> "The utmost respect for sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders and compliance with legally valid international treaties

> is indispensable for development and the consolidation of democracy." *(A/49/713)*

Finally, the provisions that relate to the problem of disarmament are also of particular importance. In keeping with paragraph 22 of the Declaration, new or restored democracies firmly support disarmament agreements between States that possess nuclear and conventional weapons.

In this connection, the delegation of Ukraine wishes to inform the General Assembly that, during the Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Budapest on 5 December 1994, Ukraine transmitted to the States depositaries of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) the instrument of our country's accession to that Treaty. As was stated by President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine when he addressed the Summit, the decision to accede to the Treaty

> "is a truly historic event which proves the peace-loving nature, openness and predictability of our foreign policy ... A State which has on its territory the third largest nuclear-weapon potential in the world has voluntarily renounced the status of nuclear State and acceded to the NPT".

Ukraine now has reason to hope that nuclear States, primarily Parties to the Trilateral Agreement dated 14 January 1994, will, in keeping with their obligations, expedite delivery to Ukraine of financial, technical and other assistance, in light of the process of our nuclear disarmament.

We hope that the start made by Ukraine in that process of nuclear disarmament will serve as a good example to other nuclear States. This would help to release major financial resources and help to channel them to development purposes which, in turn, would lead to the consolidation of democratic processes in the world.

The problem of promoting and consolidating new or restored democracies is an extremely important matter. Like any other important matter this problem should not be disregarded by the United Nations. We believe that even at this stage the United Nations is doing much to promote democratic processes in the world as a whole and in individual States in particular. We believe that this trend should be further strengthened, particularly this year when the question of promoting and consolidating new and restored democracies is being discussed at the General Assembly for the first time.

In conclusion, the delegation of Ukraine expresses the hope that draft resolution A/49/L.49 will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Samassekou (Mali) *(interpretation from French):* My delegation welcomes the inclusion on the agenda of the forty-ninth session of an additional item entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". My country joined in sponsoring the request to include this item, as well as the draft resolution now before the Assembly. We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

The question before us for consideration is of particular interest for Mali which, like many other countries, participated in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies held in Managua, Nicaragua, from 4 to 6 July 1994.

The Conference adopted two important documents — the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action. In the Declaration the Conference requested the Secretary-General to undertake a study on ways in which the United Nations system could support efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

In our various statements in the general debates at previous sessions, the delegation of Mali described to the General Assembly the profound political changes that have occurred in Mali in recent years.

Indeed, beginning on 26 March 1991, Mali, has embarked on a process of democratization with the establishment of democratic institutions and freedom of expression for print and radio journalists, the entry into the political arena of approximately 40 rival parties competing in the municipal elections, the election of a National Assembly consisting of 11 political parties and, finally, the election of a President of the Republic by universal suffrage.

While the democratic transition was concluded with the official investiture of the President of the Third Republic on 8 June 1992, the democratic process is still continuing in a particularly difficult socio-economic context.

Since the advent of democracy, State authority is constantly subjected to fresh trials. The concept of democracy is not properly understood because for some people democracy means licence, total freedom, even anarchy.

The socio-economic situation also causes concern, because Mali, like other developing countries, has few resources to deal with the many priority needs of our people: education, public health, water supplies for villages and the creation or maintenance of the infrastructure.

To these many requirements are now added the pressing demands of young people - particularly those of school age, unemployed graduates and inhabitants of certain disadvantaged areas. The Government is also facing other demands connected with employment, from people who have taken voluntary retirement and those who have lost their jobs because of structural adjustment programmes.

The situation I have just described has not affected the resolve of the authorities of my country to find solutions to existing problems. The Government has thus concluded a social covenant with the National Union of Workers, and it has also organized a national debate on the employment problem. The social covenant, by establishing a free, responsible partnership between the Government and the representatives of various socio-professional categories, has since 1992 made it possible to stem social crises, whose ongoing harmful effects have made young democracies more vulnerable.

As part of its work to promote women, the Government organized a national forum for women, followed by a workshop to define a policy for women. It also set up a Secretariat of State for social action and for the promotion of women as well as a commissariat for the promotion of women, headed by a woman holding the rank of Minister.

More recently, regional conferences have been organized throughout the country, providing an opportunity for an open and fruitful debate on the future of the nation. All people have been enabled, in their respective regions, to state their views on the main concerns of the nation and to propose solutions.

A summary of the various proposals was produced at the national level and submitted to the Government. Several steps have been recommended to consolidate democracy and the foundation of a State based on the rule of law. Particular emphasis has been placed on promoting a democratic culture for the continuous heightening of civic awareness.

It is recognized that decentralization, in keeping with the principle of open government reaffirmed by the constitution, remains one of the main ways to strengthen our young democracy in Mali and to promote economic, social and cultural development based on the specific features of each grass-roots community.

Discussions have also taken place on structural adjustment, devaluation of the CFA franc and the problem of the foreign debt. The debate on economic reform showed the need to ensure that more account was taken of the social dimension of structural adjustment. The Government has undertaken an economic recovery programme including reform of our public finances.

The international community, and particularly the United Nations system, should support young democracies throughout the world. In this respect, my delegation is pleased that democracy has been restored in Haiti, thanks to the determination of the people of Haiti and the efforts of the international community. The return, on 15 October 1994, of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide put an end to the illegal regime imposed on the Haitian people by the coup d'état of 30 September 1991. My delegation read with interest the report (A/49/689) of the Secretary-General on the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti, and listened carefully to the statement made on 28 November by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Haiti on developments in the situation since the return of President Aristide. My delegation supports his appeal to the international community to support the efforts of the Haitian Government to create conditions favourable to the establishment of a lasting democracy.

In Africa, despite the efforts made by many Governments to apply structural adjustment programmes, the economic situation and the living conditions of our peoples are still difficult. The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in June 1993, recognized the interdependence of democracy, development and human rights. It opened the way to international cooperation to promote all human rights, including the right to development.

My delegation believes that the Agenda for Development should give special attention to the specific situation of young democracies, whose consolidation will guarantee peace and security, which is essential for improving the well-being of their peoples and therefore the well-being of the entire international community.

Nascent, still-fragile democracies have to confront the adverse effects of an unfavourable economic situation, drastic structural adjustment measures, debt-related problems and socio-political tensions. This situation has a negative impact on the entire democratic process.

Strengthening the process of democratic openness and economic liberalization that has begun in many developing countries requires the support of the international community, because there can be no true democracy without development. My delegation would therefore like to take this opportunity to propose the establishment of a special fund to support new or restored democracies.

Democracy needs a secure, stable environment to bloom. In many regions international peace and security are seriously threatened by instability caused by local conflicts, resulting in increased numbers of refugees, and by religious questions, which are becoming increasingly important. My delegation calls upon the entire international community to mobilize further to confront this dangerous situation.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): The number of sponsors of draft resolution A/49/L.49 attests to the breadth and topicality of the process of restoring democracies and forming new democracies and the global scope of this process. Belarus was among the sponsors of this draft resolution.

New and restored democracies are a comparatively new phenomenon in the international community. The speed with which the democratization processes are taking place caught the international community somewhat by surprise. We lack a properly worked out mechanism to give clear prescriptions for integrating these democracies into existing and recently created international structures.

At the same time, one cannot criticize new and restored democracies for lack of willingness to adapt to existing international realities. In this context, States participating in both the Manila and Managua International Conferences sent a signal to the international community that they were interested in cooperation.

But all too often the price of integration into these new international structures is too high for these countries, which are entitled to expect greater support for their efforts from the appropriate international mechanisms, since this adaptation is in everybody's interests.

Unfortunately, we continue to note the inadequacy of the existing system of external support for reform processes in new and restored democracies when compared to the costs incurred by those democracies in the transitional period. In these circumstances, the reserves of social stability are soon depleted and require urgent coordinated action on the part of the entire international community.

Preventing a new division of the world into comparatively prosperous islands of security, which are mere specks in the ocean of the world's growing instability, requires preventing a social tsunami that could sweep away all the positive achievements that have been made in recent years. The answer to this challenge of our times is to be found in preventive diplomacy in the context of broad-based international support for efforts undertaken by new and restored democracies.

New democracies virtually everywhere are confronting the common challenge of ensuring the peaceful processes of political transformation, the establishment and consolidation of internal democratic institutions and norms, and structural readjustment accompanied by socially oriented economic transformations backed up by a system of measures and guarantees for social justice in society.

In many cases, the transitional process is painful and sometimes results in violence and unrest, which leads to a disorganization of the bases of economic life and generally accepted values and worsened international and domestic problems. It is typical that, given the inseparability of the processes of development and disarmament, the experience of some countries shows disappointing results in the conversion of military production and arms reduction when compliance with international obligations in this field diverts meagre resources from measures to undertake urgent tasks of economic development.

This problem is being faced acutely by Belarus and certain other countries with economies in transition. It is difficult to explain to our people why energy-intensive facilities are working to destroy military technology while other plants are closing down because of a lack of energy resources.

The success of the transformation processes depends of course on the countries most affected by them. But this success also depends on the manifestation of active solidarity on the part of all leading industrially developed countries, developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Since it is up to all countries, irrespective of their level of development, to create a healthy and vital world economy, the failure of economic transformations will inevitably lead to the collapse of democratic institutions. Since there is no middle ground in this process, it will soon entail a return to former confrontation, with all of its domestic, regional and international consequences. Certain groups of countries see different possibilities in this scenario.

At the Budapest meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was well advised to appeal to the leading industrially developed countries of Europe that have linked their future to purely economic factors not to ignore the questions of economic stability and security. The Managua Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies confirmed the inseparability between peace, democracy and development and the heightened interest of this group of countries, despite their differing individual situations, in liberalizing international trade, expanding investment and financial support for new economic programmes and resolving problems of external indebtedness.

Democracy is a powerful factor for socio-economic change, but this change is encountering the painful challenges ensuing from a radical break with traditional ways of life for millions of people and requires the establishment of a most-favoured-nation regime for new and restored democracies in a number of basic areas of activity. These countries might be compensated for the losses they have incurred in expanding their export potential by an expansion of the most-favoured-nation regime in trade and an alleviation of their debt burden if we wish them to join the world's oases of economic prosperity.

If we are to judge by the number of participants in the Managua Conference — 74 countries, or almost half of the world community — we can say without exaggeration that the sustainability of the development of new or restored democracies will determine the sustainability of the entire process of bringing the planet together on the eve of the third millennium of human civilization.

In this connection, the study of forms of possible support by the United Nations for efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new and restored democracies will, we hope, enable us to elaborate the necessary recommendations for developing international cooperation in this area.

The international community cannot and should not disregard the specific nature of the evolving processes in countries with new or restored democracies or with economies in transition in particular. The search for ways to promote new and restored democracies by the United Nations will be helped by the preparatory work for the third International Conference on New and Restored Democracies, to be held in 1996 in Bucharest, in which Belarus intends to play an active role.

In conclusion, I should like to express my conviction that the draft resolution on this item will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Larrain (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is very important for my country that the Assembly should be considering the item on support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies. We believe that the subject of democracy and its promotion and development is of great importance to the Organization; Chile considers it essential. One cannot ignore the clear link between democracy, peace and respect for human rights, which are extremely important goals of the Organization.

I wish to make particular reference to one of these links: that between democracy and respect for human rights. There is no doubt that the political system which provides the best guarantees of respect for those rights is the democratic system, in which the rule of law is inherent. In a democracy, the leaders, organs of the State and the governed must function within the law; there are independent courts and effective jurisdictional machinery to which recourse is available and where action can be taken when fundamental rights are violated by acts or failures to act on the part of the State itself. For this and other reasons, support for new or restored democracies is of particular importance and should engage the entire international community.

Democracy, however, cannot be understood solely as the periodical exercise of the right to elect political authorities through free and informed elections. My country believes that these elements are essential but not sufficient in and of themselves. A real democratic system is strengthened when it goes beyond mere form to embrace economic growth and social development. Without that harmonious interplay no democratic system can remain stable in time and free from social pressures.

These are factors that must be given priority consideration when we design ways and means to support the new democracies that are emerging, or countries in which that system is now being strengthened.

Since, as I have said, democracy is a stabilizing and innovative factor in relations not only among States, but also within the States themselves, it should be in the forefront of our concerns. Within this general context, we participated in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, in Managua. We would like to thank the Government and people of Nicaragua for their efforts and their organization of that important event.

In the same vein, my country will continue to contribute to all efforts that can support new democracies.

Mr. Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina): The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is an enthusiastic co-sponsor of the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.49. We believe that it will assist the new and restored democracies in fulfilling our aspirations, as well as providing some enlightenment to those democracies already established.

Democracy and freedom may be mankind's natural condition but, as the histories of our own countries indicate, it is by no means mankind's normal condition. We have had to sacrifice and struggle to gain our new status. The truest commitment to democracy and freedom manifests itself in the never-ending effort to implement fully the rights and liberties of the individual and to promote the resilience of the society and State in the defence of those rights and liberties.

It means a vigilance against totalitarian forces from within and a healthy wariness of outside domination and aggression. Most of these responsibilities fall on our sovereign nations individually, but it is recognized, and rightly so, that a mutual commitment to collective security and to resistance against external aggression also reduces the dangers from within to our democratic institutions and freedoms.

Real and perceived external threats can be and have been historically exploited to suppress individual freedoms, to promote ultra-nationalism and even fascism, and to empower totalitarian forces from within. Democracy is fragile and can be easily endangered by an inhospitable environment of fear of external forces.

As is well understood from experience, smaller nations are the most exposed to external threat; however, once that threat is removed or reduced, democracy and freedom once again flourish. We, as sovereign nations, have come together within international institutions in order to reduce potential threats through the principle of collective security.

Yet selective application of the collective security system, the Geneva Conventions and the Genocide Convention in fact transforms the entire system from a tool of legality, order and peace to a mechanism for domination and a new imperialism — the very threat all of us want to avoid.

The principles of human rights and international law, and the Charter of the United Nations must be applied only with strict and full respect and compliance in order to make them effective. It is respect for our United Nations Charter and the rules and usages of international law, and not compromise and their abrogation, that create the conditions for democratic development.

There must not be "less privileged" or "more privileged" States in respect of the obligations and rights that arise from membership of the United Nations and commitment to its Charter. Selective respect and selective approaches may lead only to the outbreak of hostilities and wars of aggressions. History stands witness to the fact that whenever these principles have not been upheld and supported by the international community, the world has faced disasters and atrocities.

Yet these are the conditions that have been imposed upon my country, Bosnia and Herzegovina — born out of the democratic desire of people to assume their independence from a regime that refused to accept the democratic trends of the region and engaged in the most totalitarian of pursuits.

Two and a half years later, the resolve of my Government and its people to live in a democratic and multi-ethnic society remains unwavering. As the saying goes, "the proof is in the pudding". In the territories allocated to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina — at least those that are controlled by the Government —

determined efforts are made to live up to democratic standards. Those that have committed human rights abuses are prosecuted. Freedom of the press and media still flourishes and in fact is promoted by my Government despite the climate of war and siege. In his report of 31 October 1994 (E/CN.4/1995/54), the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights abuses in the Former Yugoslavia notes that

> "The rights protected by the Constitution [of the Federation] include all those currently recognized in international human rights law and others which have not yet attained full international recognition. There is also specific enumeration of a package of rights which would entirely reverse the effects of the practice of 'ethnic cleansing' ... The Constitution further provides for the possible deployment in the Federation area of international human-rights-monitoring operations."

Here, my Government wishes to express its great appreciation to those United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) personnel deployed in the territory of the Federation that assist my Government and local authorities in applying these standards.

And what are the efforts of the Pale Serbs *vis-à-vis* democracy? Again, the proof is in the pudding. They herald as heroes those that rape and murder. Foreign journalists, not to mention United Nations and Red Cross personnel are continually prevented from conducting their work in the occupied areas. A November 1994 report of Helsinki Human Rights Watch states:

> "In July of this year, the campaign to expel non-Serbs from Bosnian Serb-held areas of northern Bosnia accelerated, and it continues to this day ... and continues in areas that have long been under absolute Bosnian Serb control; indeed the sweeping institutional nature of ethnic cleansing would not be possible without such control ... [and] thus provide a powerful counterweight to the argument put forth by high-ranking United Nations officials and other international leaders who claim that human rights abuses will decrease after an overall peace accord is signed."

Yet, despite the starkness of the evidence I have just provided from the Special Rapporteur and Helsinki Watch, those entrusted to deliver peace to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to carry on the policy of treating victim and aggressor alike, as if both victim and aggressor are equally committed to democracy. The Contact Group is now toying with the idea of allowing these same Pale Serbs to confederate with their sponsors in Belgrade. And what are we to tell our people about this development? Are we to tell them that their struggle for democracy is in vain? Indeed, it has become increasingly evident that some in the international community wish that we would roll over dead on our sides. Or should we tell our people, the raped mothers and the maimed children, that those who did the damage to them did so in the pursuit of democracy? Indeed, some would wish to see this lie pronounced as truth. And we, the Bosnians, are asking ourselves: Why are we being denied our democratic dreams? Are we unworthy of democracy? And is there a dimension in our character and heritage that makes us unworthy of fulfilling these dreams?

The recent manoeuvres of the established democracies of the Contact Group suggest that they have forgotten their own struggles towards democracy. We wonder if the "new" democracy of the Contact Group has fully understood what is democratic and what is not, as it increasingly chooses to associate itself with the interests of the aggressor rather than with those of the new-born Bosnian democracy. In Bosnia the term "democracy" has been perverted — perverted to the extent that war criminals now salivate over the prospect of having their birthdays celebrated in an independent and ethnically pure State. This perverted dream will come true only if the Bosnians and the Contact Group let it happen. The Bosnians will not let it happen.

The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is proud to have become a member of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies. The experiences of all its members are extremely valuable and should be given due attention. To that end, we shall continue to bring our struggle for democracy to the attention of the international community. We remain committed to democracy and will not give up our just struggle. And when we have reached our goal — as surely we will — we will not abandon those whose struggle continues, for we have learned many lessons on the road to freedom and democracy. Perhaps the most important of those lessons concerns the need for resilience in the face of abandonment.

Mr. M. M. Rezaul Karim (Bangladesh): My delegation welcomes and fully endorses the inclusion of item 159 on the agenda of the General Assembly. We believe that this is both a timely and a necessary initiative regarding a subject that requires continuing scrutiny, focus and attention.

Bangladesh was happy to participate in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held at Managua from 4 to 6 July, and, thus, to be a party to the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action, now before us. I take this opportunity to record once again our deep appreciation and thanks for the initiative, dedication and painstaking efforts of President Violetta Barrios de Chamorro and the Government and people of Nicaragua, which made this Conference possible and eminently successful.

It is not my intention to refer yet again to the thrust of the outcome of the Managua Conference. This is self-evident. I should like, however, to highlight the two central questions remaining at the core of the decisions that were taken: "Why democracy?" and "Whither democracy?"

In answering the question "Why democracy?" we can sum up the situation by stating that democracy embraces the key elements of popular or people-centred participation, the peaceful succession of Governments, political legitimacy, accountability and transparency. It is widely recognized today that the problems of democracy call for more democracy, and that democracy is viable not always because it chooses the best Governments, but because of its fundamental ability to remove bad Governments peacefully.

At the heart of democracy and its inherent political pluralism are certain basic guarantees that uphold the sovereignty of the people, the worth and dignity of the individual, the rule of law, full respect for and protection of fundamental human rights and, above all, the peaceful search for human development. Democracy is therefore synonymous with peace and stability and provides the actual link between development and human rights. Autocracy, as the Managua Declaration underscores, is incapable of producing commitment to peace. It cannot withstand the free exchange of ideas. Freedom of the press and free speech remain the bastions of democracy and the highest expression of the people's will.

In answering the question "Whither democracy?" we must remember that two aspects — the internal factors and the external factors — are paramount.

Internally, it has to be underscored that democracy, like development, is a process that must be sustained. Democracy is not an end in itself. It is not a static but a dynamic state — a continuum that must be constantly renewed and revitalized. Neither emerging nor established democracies can afford to be complacent, especially in the face of ever-prevalent anti-social and anti-democratic forces. Organizational weaknesses mean that strengthening the capacity, reliability and integrity of core institutions involves long lead times. A democratic culture has to grow and be nurtured to embrace traditions, experience and a broad-based mentality and attitude of compromise and negotiation.

High levels of poverty and unemployment, lack of distributive justice, social unrest arising from ethnic, cultural and minority differences and powerful vested interests that need to be contained remain barriers, and these must be addressed continuously and simultaneously. The hallmark of democracy is constant vigilance to overcome recognized fragility. At the same time, one must not be oblivious to the need to exercise due caution to ensure that democracy is not regarded as being synonymous with licence and anarchy.

Externally, it is a truism — one that has been underlined by the Secretary-General — that democracy is as important among nations as within nations. It seems a particular irony that at a time when world society is characterized by the "triumph" of democracy we have also come face to face with the reality of increasing insularity and the marginalization of the interests of the third world. It is thus imperative to stress that sustaining democracy and development within States is closely linked to the expansion of democratization and the creation of a more conducive economic environment between States at all levels in the international system.

Democratization in international relations is the only basis for building mutual support and respect among nations. As the Secretary-General has stated,

> "In this new era, when information, knowledge, communication and intellectual interchange are critical to economic and social success, democracy must be seen not only as an ideal, or an event, but also as a process which is essential to achieving tangible progress. Democracy supplies the only long-term and sustainable route to successful development." *(A/48/935, para.137)*

Bangladesh fully endorses and supports the essential premise of the Managua message — that the democratic process and progress in our countries should not occur in isolation, but must be provided with an avenue for continuous communication and contact.

The elements that I have underscored are born of our own experience. Shortly after her election, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, speaking at a conference of international Parliamentarians in Dhaka, underscored the point in these words:

> "Democracy is not merely a system of governance. Democracy is a social system and a lifestyle. The measure of democracy is the measure of the freedom of its humblest citizen. For strengthening the base of democracy there is no alternative to amelioration of the condition of the common man. The people are the main driving force of development."

For us in Bangladesh the choice of democracy was not based primarily upon our adamant opposition to any form of authoritarianism. The previous autocratic regime was foredoomed to isolation and ultimate failure. Without legitimacy its policies became atrophied. Efforts to short-circuit the mandate of the people proved fruitless. Economic and social activities that were distorted to reflect the whims of the ruling élite and the desire to preserve power at any cost were exposed. Overall deprivation was camouflaged by high-visibility projects. The inevitable result was alienation between the Government and the people.

Our experience was replicated in country after country. The myth that only authoritarian regimes could ensure efficiency and take decisive steps was exploded. It is now evident that without mass participation in decision-making and without the responsibility, accountability and transparency which democracy stands for, economic growth and the core values and priorities of society cannot be realized.

For Bangladesh the road to democracy has been a difficult and painstaking process. Yet it has been fortified over the past four years by tangible achievements. Uncompromising resistance, mass movement and agreement among all parties to restore democracy enabled us to replace an entrenched dictatorship with an interim government squarely within our constitutional provisions, charged with the sole task of holding democratic elections. The election, held within the constitutional limit of 90 days, was universally acknowledged to be an exemplary model of democratic expression. Many believed that the new government would seek to gain more power. Yet, through a consensus forged among all parties, a historic transfer was effected from the presidential to the parliamentary system of government. A nation-wide referendum endorsed this change.

The Parliament became the focal point of all development endeavours of the nation. It closely pursued the task of ensuring checks and balances, acting as a catalyst for administrative accountability and transparency, buttressing the rule of law and isolating and addressing human rights distortions and abuses. Since then, efforts have been set in motion to ensure that the succession of governments takes place through elections held in a fair, impartial and peaceful manner. The government is firmly committed to sustaining and strengthening all measures to this end, with the broadest leeway within the parameters of the Constitution of Bangladesh.

Our experience has underlined certain palpable truths. Without democracy the people's potential for socio-economic progress cannot flower. Human rights become meaningless in the face of the dire constraints of poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease.

For Bangladesh the fight against poverty and steps to unlock growth remain the foremost challenge to sustaining democracy. Concerted efforts have been made to provide a policy environment that will enable us to move towards market-economy freedom. Our core strategy revolves around the development of human resources, a concept that combines participation of the people, alleviation of poverty, supportive environmental growth and advancement of human rights and welfare. Its fundamental goal is to bring the deprived and disadvantaged from the periphery to the centre of development.

Important incremental gains have accrued. We are on the threshold of achieving food self-sufficiency; absolute poverty has declined; the literacy rate has increased; primary health-care services are being extended to the village level; significant advances have been made in containing population growth and in supportive immunization programmes; important measures have been taken to check environmental degradation and contain the devastating impact of recurrent natural disasters; social legislation is being strengthened to protect the rights of women, children, minorities and the disadvantaged; and overall per capita income has gone up, inflation is down and there is a viable macroeconomic base that can sustain growth, which has reached a current rate of 4.5 per cent.

I wish to say in conclusion that democracy requires a total endeavour, nationally and in partnership with global society. Bangladesh fully supports draft resolution A/49/L.49, now before the Assembly, and is happy to be one of its sponsors.

The President (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974, and resolution 43/177, of 15 December 1988, I now call on the head of the Observer delegation of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me, first of all, to thank the people and the Government of Nicaragua for having hosted the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, and also for having invited us to participate in the Conference. I should like also to extend thanks and appreciation to the Government and the people of Romania for the offer to host the next conference.

At this moment in history, the Palestinian people is going through a transition, from national liberation to the building of State institutions, on a democratic basis, in the political, economic and social spheres. The past experience of the Palestine Liberation Organization will have its effect, without a doubt, on the course of events in the future. We are proud of the democratic nature of that experience which endured, even under the special conditions of the national liberation phase.

The Palestine Liberation Organization, by its very nature, is an umbrella organization and a structure that encompasses many organizations, forces and political parties. The decision to act on a basis of pluralism, respect for freedom of thought and expression and the democratization of internal relations within the Organization, was the most important decision in the contemporary Palestinian experience. Moreover, the Palestinian experience has enshrined many important elements of democracy, particularly freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of the press, the promotion of political and religious tolerance, the principle of free elections at all levels and the complete absence of all repressive and illegal practices. In the course of the national liberation phase, the Palestinian people succeeded in making a practice of respecting the opinions of others, and of making its decisions democratically. It succeeded in avoiding all internal confrontations, in spite of difficult conditions and external factors that militated against our national interests.

Now, after the signing, in the context of the Middle East peace process, of the Declaration of Principles between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, our Palestinian people faces the new challenge of rebuilding in this transitional period, and working towards the final solution that should include, as far as we are concerned, the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, with Al-Quds as its capital.

We believe that the overriding need in this transitional period is the existence of the democratic foundation for the rebuilding process. At the very centre of this is the holding of free and democratic elections in the Palestinian territories in which all Palestinians, with all their political affiliations, should participate. It is important that such elections should lead to a sound form of democratic government wherein the executive is separate from the legislative. Here, we would emphasize the right of all citizens, regardless of their political affiliations, to participate in the elections, even if their affiliation is with political forces or parties that oppose the peace process, so long as such forces or parties act within the law and are committed to achieving their objectives within Palestinian society by peaceful means. The holding of Palestinian general elections as agreed in the Declaration of Principles must be held on a free basis. This means that the Israeli side must discharge its contractual obligations under the Declaration. Foremost among those obligations is the withdrawal of Israel's army of occupation from the inhabited Palestinian areas, namely the cities, villages and refugee camps in order for our people to be able to participate freely in the elections.

The electoral process also requires appropriate international monitoring. In this respect, the United Nations can and must play a vital role in supporting the holding of the elections in a fair and sound fashion. The elections will provide the foundation upon which the Palestinian edifice will be built and within which the fundamental human rights and principal freedoms of all Palestinian citizens will be guaranteed.

Support for the Palestinian people by the international community, and by the United Nations in particular, will undoubtedly serve the cause of democracy in the Middle East and in the world at large. We will learn from our experience and learn from our mistakes. We will learn also from the experience of other democracies in the world. We are convinced that the success of the Palestinian democratic experiment will contribute, without a doubt, to the achievement of a just and lasting peace in the Middle East and to the consolidation of that peace.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to announce that the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/49/L.49: Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and the United States of America.

The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/49/L.49.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.49?

Draft resolution A/49/L.49 was adopted (resolution 49/30).

The President (*interpretation from French*): Before calling on speakers who wish to explain their positions on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) *(interpretation from Chinese):* On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I should like to announce that the Chinese delegation did not participate in the adoption of draft resolution A/49/L.49. My delegation requests that that position be reflected in the official records of the General Assembly.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 159?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I should like to announce that concerning agenda item 37 "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", the General Assembly will consider all the draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 37 and not yet acted upon on Tuesday, 20 December, in the morning.

Members will recall that the Assembly at its 74th plenary meeting, on 2 December, took action on six of the draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 37.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.

United Nations A/49/PV.81

General Assembly

Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

81st Meeting
Thursday, 8 December 1994, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Agenda item 103

Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People: opening of the Decade

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/49/444, A/49/536)

Note by the Secretary-General (A/49/446)

The President *(interpretation from French)*: In accordance with its decision 49/408 of 7 November 1994, the General Assembly is meeting to mark the opening of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

The year 1993, which, under resolution 45/164 of 18 December 1990, was proclaimed the International Year for the World's Indigenous People, has made it possible for the international community to gain a better understanding of the specificity of the world's indigenous people and the problems they face.

The stir this created as well as the great interest shown virtually everywhere in the world in the context of the year has justified the need to go beyond mere symbolic manifestations and to envisage and establish a true programme for the promotion of indigenous people.

For this reason, the General Assembly, by its resolution 48/163 of 21 December 1993, decided to launch the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, which will be inaugurated on 10 December 1994. This plenary meeting of the General Assembly is being held against this backdrop. So, at the end of a preparatory period which lasted throughout 1994, the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People will devote itself to the implementation of a 10-year Programme of Action for indigenous populations.

Thanks to this Decade, the international community will now have an operational framework in which to strengthen cooperation in resolving problems facing indigenous people in areas as varied as the protection of cultural identity, economic development, human rights, the environment, education and health.

The draft resolution which is now before the General Assembly and which has already been approved by consensus by the Third Committee calls *inter alia* for an operational-oriented slant to the Decade on the subject of "Indigenous people — partnership in action".

I should emphasize that indigenous people are a vulnerable group in world society, one which has long been neglected. Their social structures and their lifestyle have suffered the repercussions of modern development. They have been under growing pressure to make their languages, religions, knowledge, arts and oral traditions and other aspects of their lifestyle conform to those of the majority social groups around them. However, we must acknowledge that, despite all these difficulties, the world's indigenous people are not prepared to accept in silence the erosion of their cultures.

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum. When the result of a recorded and/or roll-call vote is followed by an asterisk, see annex to the record.

In that respect, we will shortly hear direct from representatives of indigenous people as they express their concerns, make their proposals and list the priorities they would like to see implemented during the Decade. Allow me also to mention how important I believe it is to ensure for these diverse indigenous cultures a framework that would allow them not only to survive but also to blossom.

At the national level, this can be translated as a firm commitment to a multi-ethnic and pluricultural society. History teaches us that cultures do not disappear of and by themselves. Peoples always, in fact, try to preserve as best they can their identities and their particular cultural features.

At the international level, now at a time of increased political and economic cooperation between nations, as seen in high-level meetings such as the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development, and the recently concluded General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) trade agreement, it is essential to take account of the fact that many peoples and cultures continue to exist throughout the world while seeking to preserve their integrity and identity.

One of the aims of the United Nations set forth in the Charter is to achieve international cooperation by solving international economic, social, cultural or humanitarian problems and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all people without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.

In these conditions, the international community and the United Nations in particular are duty-bound to incorporate efforts to protect human diversity into the efforts currently under way to achieve a world consensus on fundamental issues relating to peace, security, development, the environment and human rights.

This is the only way that the human society in which we live today could truly become enriched by the values and diversity of cultures and the forms of social organization of indigenous people.

Before calling on the first speaker in the debate, I should like to propose that the list of speakers in the debate on agenda item 103 be now closed.

It was so decided.

Mr. Staples (Australia): This inauguration of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People reflects a recognition by the United Nations that more effort needs to be made to promote and protect the rights of indigenous peoples. It is a brutal fact that they have been marginalized to the extent that they are usually the most disadvantaged groups in the societies in which they live. That is a situation which must be addressed by the international community.

Indigenous peoples have suffered dispossession. With few exceptions, they did not participate in designing the constitutional order of the States into which they were incorporated. Nor were they given a voice in the process of decision-making on matters which directly concerned them. They were subjugated to different social, cultural and economic systems. They often suffered expulsion and forced migration, with little or no compensation.

While the work of decolonization undertaken by the United Nations has essentially been completed, the effects of centuries of colonialism have still to be addressed thoroughly and with justice. It is fair to say that at the international level, the rights of indigenous peoples have generally been marginalized. That situation began to change in 1982, with the first meeting of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. Since then, indigenous peoples have become increasingly aware of the benefits of working at the international level, and their influence is slowly growing. As today's inauguration demonstrates, their voices are increasingly being heard in the United Nations.

The United Nations is the world focus for the promotion of increased understanding of and respect for their rights. The Decade must be a framework for an on-going process of international action on indigenous issues. The Decade will provide an unprecedented opportunity for the international community to address actively and positively the full range of issues of concern to indigenous peoples. Redressing the dispossession and disadvantage suffered by Australia's indigenous peoples is a major human rights objective of the Australian Government. In an historic statement at the launching in Australia of the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, in December 1992, the Australian Prime Minister said that non-indigenous Australians must bear responsibility for the history of violation of the rights of indigenous Australians, for taking their traditional lands and destroying their traditional ways of life, and for practising discrimination and exclusion. Australians are increasingly understanding that there is nothing to fear or to lose in the recognition of this historical truth, or in the extension of social justice and the broadening of social democracy to include indigenous Australians. Indeed, there is everything to gain.

Australians generally are appreciating more broadly the depth and diversity of aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and the contribution they make to enriching our national life and identity.

The Decade's theme is "Indigenous people — partnership in action". The Decade must be based on true partnership, with the aim of fostering new relationships between States and indigenous peoples and between the international community and indigenous peoples. These new relationships must be equitable and based on mutual respect and understanding.

The Australian Government strongly supports the Decade as an opportunity to promote the rights of indigenous peoples and to focus the attention of the international community on their situations. Australia is committed to working with the United Nations and in partnership with indigenous peoples to promote successful outcomes for the Decade both internationally and within Australia. Australia was very pleased to sponsor a draft resolution in the Third Committee on the Decade, and my delegation is particularly pleased to note that that draft resolution was adopted yesterday without a vote and with an increased number of sponsors from all regions of the world.

Australia's national indigenous peoples organization, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, has responsibility for coordination, planning and implementation of Decade activities in Australia.

The success of the Decade in many instances will depend on the contributions and initiatives of the United Nations specialized agencies, the regional commissions and other United Nations organizations. We are pleased to note recent progress towards strengthening inter-agency cooperation on indigenous issues, as reflected in the involvement of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Bank and others in planning joint projects and activities for the Decade. The High Commissioner for Human Rights will have an important role in making coordination effective, as will the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in his capacity as Coordinator of the Decade. In this context the establishment of an adequately resourced focal unit in the Centre for Human Rights is an urgent priority.

The programme of action for the Decade will enable the international community to address the central issues of concern to indigenous peoples over a more productive period of time than was possible during the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. The programme must be shaped to achieve lasting improvements in their economic, social, cultural and political situations and to enable them to exercise and enjoy their rights more effectively.

A major outcome of the Decade should be the adoption of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. The Decade should also encourage the development of other international standards for the protection and promotion of their human rights, such as those relating to indigenous cultural and intellectual property, the environment and development. Australia believes that the Decade also provides an opportunity for Governments to support the creation of a permanent forum in the United Nations system to address the broad range of issues of concern to them.

The goals, themes and objectives of the Decade must be accompanied by a strong commitment on the part of all Member States to achieving social justice and equity for indigenous peoples throughout the world. We owe it not only to them but also to ourselves to meet the challenge of achieving lasting results during the Decade, of establishing new partnerships and of bringing the dispossessed out of the shadows.

Mrs. Pavall (Norway): On behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and my own country, Norway — I have the honour to congratulate the General Assembly on this memorable day with the opening of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. This is an event that we are very happy to take part in, and we have great expectations as to the results of the Decade.

The Nordic countries see the Decade as a fitting continuation of the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, which laid the foundation for raising the world's awareness of indigenous peoples and for bringing indigenous values and rights into focus. The Decade should, in our opinion, mobilize international cooperation in order to improve the social and economic conditions of indigenous peoples and to establish standards which guarantee their human rights. The target areas of health, education, environment, human rights and development remain priority issues throughout the Decade. This Decade will take place, however, within an ongoing and dynamic process of international political action on indigenous issues, and rather than taking the focus away from that process the Decade should be an instrument to further the interests of the indigenous peoples.

Incidentally, another international Decade will be proclaimed soon: the Decade on Human Rights Education. It is only natural that the two Decades should have a bearing upon each other. Education both about and for indigenous peoples is an essential part of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

The theme suggested for the Decade, "Indigenous people — partnership in action", signals how we all need to cooperate to make this Decade a success. It is neither Governments alone nor indigenous peoples by themselves that can make important changes happen. Governments, indigenous peoples and even non-governmental organizations must be closely involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of activities during the Decade. The new partnership must also be reflected as an integral part of deliberations and policies throughout the United Nations system as well as in national policies and development-assistance programmes.

Indigenous populations count at least 300 million inhabitants with different backgrounds and living conditions. Local strategies and activities planned for the Decade will therefore be different depending upon the area and the needs of the participants. Internationally, the approach is different, and the Governments of the Nordic countries are grateful for the report, submitted by the Secretary-General, on a comprehensive programme of action for the International Decade. I can assure the Assembly that we have studied the ideas and suggestions it contains with great interest, and we look forward to thorough discussion of the programme of action on the basis of this report.

In this regard, allow me to comment on a few aspects which are of particular importance to us. After the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993 suggested that the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous peoples should be considered, this question was discussed in depth at the twelfth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations in July this year. There is a strong interest in continuing this important work. We therefore want to urge Governments to continue to support and to take an active part in this process of consultation. Again, we stress the importance of elaborating the proposal in full partnership with indigenous peoples.

The Nordic countries have on several occasions expressed their commitment to the ongoing work towards drafting a universal declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. We are grateful to the Working Group on Indigenous Populations, under the able chairmanship of Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes, for having completed its mandate of formulating a draft declarations on the rights of indigenous peoples. The draft declaration is now before the Commission on Human Rights. We urge Governments to adopt a constructive role in the discussion of that draft. It is also of utmost importance to our Governments that indigenous peoples should be able to make substantive contributions to the Commission's consideration of the draft declaration. The consideration of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples should be given high priority by the Commission, with a view to making it possible for the General Assembly to adopt the draft declaration as soon as possible. This Decade should not be allowed to end without the declarations being proclaimed.

Words, however, are not enough. Action must follow, and resources are needed. It is of crucial importance that adequate financial and human resources be provided to support the efforts to be made during the Decade. Contributions may be in the form of support for concrete activities or, as the Norwegian Government has already done, in the form of a substantial contribution to the Voluntary Fund for the Decade. As for the United Nations, we would like to see a much larger portion of the regular budget used on the indigenous sector. It is also essential that the indigenous aspect be included in United Nations activities and operations systemwide. We therefore encourage the Coordinator of the Decade to facilitate the establishment of links between indigenous communities and the United Nations system with a view to integrating the concerns of indigenous peoples in the planning and execution of programmes.

Next year, two important conferences will take place, the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, both of which are important also from an indigenous perspective. We therefore sincerely hope that indigenous issues will be included as part of the ongoing preparations for the two conferences.

Efforts must also be made within the Decade to ensure that indigenous peoples — as one of the most disadvantaged groups in society — receive the necessary attention in order to bring to the forefront their special development needs within the overall context of development.

Before concluding our statement, I should like to mention the excellent work carried out by the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Rigoberta Menchu Tum, and the important experience we have gained through her efforts. This is experience which is valuable and should be drawn upon in the further planning for the Decade.

Finally, it is our sincere hope that the beginning of the International Decade for the World's Indigenous People will provide a new point of departure for the promotion of the rights of indigenous peoples, as well as for the process of building confidence and justice.

Mr. Keating (New Zealand): Today we celebrate the beginning of an International Decade with a unique character. This Decade is an opportunity to acknowledge the status of indigenous people in their respective countries. The Decade is directed at making an effective and ongoing contribution towards the solution of the problems that face indigenous people in many parts of the world. New Zealand strongly supports the aims of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. We are confident that the invaluable opportunity provided by the Decade's institution for progress in the areas identified by the United Nations in 1993 will yield fruit.

Mr. Blandino Canto (Dominican Republic), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Work has already begun to promote greater awareness of the interests of indigenous people and to try to develop solutions to their difficulties in these areas — human rights, the environment, development, education and health. Achievements in the International Year of the World's Indigenous People provided a basis for further action and progress, at both the international and the national levels.

The enjoinder to us all underlying the United Nations proclamation is that the Decade must move forward from here. This is a process which New Zealand wholeheartedly supports. We will participate fully in encouraging and trying to facilitate the achievement of the Decade's aims and look to other States to do likewise.

In order to ensure that all the effort put into the Decade will bear concrete results, the New Zealand Government emphasizes that the Programme of Activities developed for the Decade must be focused and action-oriented. Careful consideration of the activities to be included is necessary, so as to produce a well-supported plan. We welcome the work done so far on the development of a Programme of Activities, at the Technical Meeting in Geneva in July, and since then by Mrs. Daes and the Secretary-General. We also endorse the proposal to hold a second technical meeting on the Decade in 1995 to help finalize planning for the Decade.

Clearly, many people and agencies have a vital role to play in designing and putting into action the programmes which will give the Decade its worth, recognizing that indigenous people must themselves be given the opportunity to play a key part in these processes. It is important therefore that measures be taken to facilitate their active involvement in projects at both the planning and execution stages.

New Zealand also believes that an objective of the Decade should be to promote increased cooperation between indigenous people, so as to increase their own effective role in the resolution of the problems facing them. Governments are encouraged to work with indigenous people in a spirit of partnership. To achieve sustained progress towards the achievement of the Decade's goals, we believe it is important that appropriate domestic activities reflect the needs and aspirations of the indigenous people of each country. In New Zealand, the focus for the first year of the Decade will be the Year of the Maori language, *Te Tau o Te Reo Maori*. This underlines the importance attached to the language as a vital part of the identity and culture of Maori.

New Zealand particularly encourages the agencies of the United Nations to take action, putting into effect the United Nations commitment to the aims of the Decade. We welcome the attention given in the Secretary-General's preliminary report (A/49/444) on a comprehensive programme of action for the Decade as to how this can be done.

An important step towards increasing information flows about the situation of indigenous people can certainly be taken by collecting statistical data. New Zealand also encourages the designation of focal points on indigenous issues within the specialized agencies and the development institutions, as was requested by the United Nations resolution on the Decade last year.

New Zealand also welcomes the report's suggestions of ways in which particular agencies can involve themselves in the Decade. The key issue is really for agencies to take action on indigenous issues as part of their core activities, recognizing that such issues have an important place in their mainstream work and according them appropriate priority.

Agencies could also provide a valuable focus for financial and other forms of support for the Decade by taking the lead in coordinating work on particular objectives. We welcome preliminary work on coordination and planning that has already been done in recent inter-agency contacts, and we look forward to continuing progress in this area.

Next, New Zealand would like to reiterate its strong support for the strengthening of the Centre for Human Rights of the United Nations Secretariat and for the establishment, within the Centre, of a unit focused on indigenous issues. The international developments currently taking place in the field of indigenous rights and the need for suitable support during the running of the Decade greatly enhance the need for the allocation of appropriate resources in this area. Among the international developments referred to there is the question of establishing within the United Nations system a permanent forum for indigenous people. With the launching of the Decade, it is particularly timely to give consideration to the establishment of such a forum.

It is appropriate also to begin to focus on the upcoming consideration of the draft declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. New Zealand looks forward to the fifty-first session of the Commission on Human Rights, at the beginning of next year. We expect that on that occasion a suitable mechanism for Governments' discussion of the draft will be decided upon.

New Zealand urges that consideration be given to ensuring appropriate access for indigenous people to the agreed process. The New Zealand Government considers this to be integral to the nature of the document and to be a natural step along the path towards the eventual adoption of a suitable declaration.

New Zealand is a long-standing proponent of the development and adoption of an appropriate declaration that recognizes the right of indigenous people to greater involvement in the determination of their economic and social destiny. We encourage States to give their attention to ensuring progress on the draft, and we hope that the adoption of a final text will, without fail, take place in good time within the Decade.

As was mentioned earlier, New Zealand believes that the success of the Decade will depend to a great extent upon the further development of partnerships — successfully demonstrated — between Governments and indigenous people during the International Year of Indigenous People. We now need to build on that and to use the opportunity of a longer time-frame to work for further progress towards the solution of problems faced by indigenous people.

As we participate in this important international initiative, we shall also continue our efforts domestically and in discussion with Maori to ensure that their rights and concerns are accorded special attention, consistent with the founding document of our country, the Treaty of Waitangi.

New Zealand has a range of mechanisms and policies that recognize the distinct place of Maori in our society. Furthermore, the New Zealand Government will continue to promote awareness and understanding of Maori culture and language, as evidenced by the decision to mark the first year of the Decade as the Year of Maori Language. It will continue to promote development opportunities for Maori and improvement in the delivery of social services to Maori.

But the New Zealand Government will also continue to work actively to try to find solutions to the remaining difficulties. It is timely, in this regard, to mention that the New Zealand Government's policy proposals for resolving Maori grievances under the Treaty of Waitangi were released yesterday. This marks the beginning of an in-depth process of consultation with Maori to ensure that their views of the proposals are considered before the policies are finalized. The Government wishes to achieve settlements of Maori grievances that are fair, achievable and durable. The process will be a challenging one, but it is none the less critical to achieving progress on the settlement of Treaty grievances.

The Decade provides the mechanism for all to act together to strengthen international cooperation in working towards solutions to the problems faced by indigenous people throughout the world. New Zealand therefore calls again upon Governments, the United Nations and its agencies and organizations, intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies and the non-indigenous nationals of all States to recognize fully the status of indigenous people and to convert their partnership with indigenous people into positive action throughout the next 10 years and thereafter.

Mr. Goodleaf (Canada): Canada welcomes the opportunity to speak on this occasion to mark the beginning of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. As the first and only aboriginal person to have been appointed at the rank of Deputy Minister in Canada, I am particularly proud to represent Canada in joining the international community in its tribute to the world's indigenous people.

The Decade honours indigenous people from around the world whose contributions, big and small, bring richness and vitality to our global community. Its proclamation is a testament to the efforts and contributions of many individuals and organizations over the years. We should like to express our recognition of the work of individuals like the goodwill Ambassador, Ms. Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Mrs. Erica-Irene Daes and the other members of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

Canada is no stranger to this Assembly. Its commitment to the values of the United Nations can be measured daily, and its commitment to international cooperation stands as the hallmark of our partnerships with other nations. Canada stands again before representatives herewith equal determination to ensure that the goals set for the Decade we celebrate are achieved.

Canada took pride in being one of the sponsors of the draft resolution that sets out guiding principles, priorities and directions for action during the Decade, as well as a framework for international cooperation. We call on Governments and, in particular, on the Secretary-General and the United Nations system to work together, in cooperation with indigenous people around the world, to give substance to our commitments.

In our view, the United Nations system will play an important role in determining the success of the Decade. We welcome the appointment of the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights as Coordinator for the Decade and the Secretary-General's preliminary report on a comprehensive programme of activities. We want to highlight the fact that the report recognizes that consultation and cooperation with indigenous people must be a guiding principle. We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's intention to provide additional resources from within the regular budget of the United Nations to strengthen the work of the Coordinator and the Centre for Human Rights.

We recognize the significant role of the specialized agencies of the United Nations system in planning and implementing activities for the Decade. We commend those agencies that are considering ways to increase their efforts to take special account, in their budgeting and programming, of the needs of indigenous people. We note the interest of the United Nations Development Programme in the promotion of indigenous partnership, trade and development. We urge the Coordinator and agencies to continue their collaboration and to seek innovative, creative ways to involve indigenous people and organizations in their activities.

We look forward to the submission of a final comprehensive programme of action to the General Assembly at it fiftieth session, and we are prepared to take part in the future meetings for planning and reviewing the Decade.

There are many other ongoing and interrelated activities at the domestic, regional and international levels which can be brought together and advanced under the unifying goal and theme of the Decade. Of special importance to Canada is the progress of the draft declaration on indigenous rights through the United Nations system. At the next session of the Commission on Human Rights to consider the draft declaration, ensuring that the process provides for the most effective participation of indigenous representatives must be a priority. We are committed to working with States Members of the United Nations, as well as with the representatives of indigenous people from Canada and around the world, to adopt the declaration during the Decade. In Canada we are seeking the views of other Governments, aboriginal organizations and other potential partners on objectives and plans we will pursue during the Decade.

We are all very much aware that further changes are needed if challenges faced by aboriginal people in all countries are to be overcome. In Canada much has been accomplished, and much is under way to deal with aboriginal issues in ways reflecting the partnership in action. Canada's general aboriginal policy follows two broad themes: building a new relationship based on trust, mutual respect and aboriginal participation in decision-making, and strengthening aboriginal communities through initiatives designed to build stronger, healthier and more self-reliant communities.

The Government of Canada is prepared to act on the premise that aboriginal people in Canada possess the inherent right of self-government and that that right exists within the Canadian Constitution. Canada is committed to making aboriginal self-government a practical reality, in partnership with aboriginal people, other Governments in Canada and Canadians. Giving effect to that inherent right will require significant changes to existing arrangements, and discussions have been held on how this might be accomplished.

Yesterday the Government of Canada announced an unprecedented and comprehensive agreement that will fundamentally change the relationship between Canada and the First Nations in the Province of Manitoba. The agreement sets out a framework for transferring authority and accountability into the hands of the Province's First Nation leaders.

As a result of other negotiations between aboriginal groups and Governments, land-claim settlements have now been reached across the Canadian Arctic and elsewhere. They provide the means for claims beneficiaries to preserve their traditional way of life while participating fully in modern economic-development opportunities. In some cases they are related to new Government structures, such as the creation of Canada's third territory, Nunavut, by 1999.

I would like to highlight a few other initiatives which also relate closely to the United Nations goal for the International Decade. In the area of health, a comprehensive policy is being developed with national aboriginal organizations, designed to address the health and social problems facing aboriginal people. In education, there are new initiatives at all levels, from head-start programmes for pre-school children to expanded funding for post-secondary education. In 1970 there were approximately 800 students pursuing post-secondary education; today we have more than 21,000.

Changes are being achieved in other ways as well. Aboriginal people are moving to the forefront of Canadian life in business and commerce, culture and the arts, educational endeavours, public service, law, medicine and so forth. National aboriginal achievement awards have started to give special recognition to these individuals.

Canada's first Arctic Ambassador, Mary Simon, is well-known to many here for her activities, particularly on behalf of the Inuit. At the inauguration of the International Year of the World's Indigenous People she spoke on behalf of indigenous groups.

The International Decade presents us all with a unique and exciting opportunity. It should inspire us to look ahead and consider what objectives we might set, what plans we might make, what goals we might reach — domestically and in cooperation with partners in other countries in the United Nations system — and, equally important, with indigenous peoples.

Mr. Duchicela (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In August of 1533, on the death of Atahualpa, the last ruling Inca of the Tahuantisuyo, one of the wise men of the Empire declared in profound sorrow and despair, "*Chaupi Punllapi tutayarca*" — "It became night in the middle of the day." Few phrases manage to summarize with such clarity and vision the fate suffered by the Indians of my country since the Spanish invasion. It is a phrase that can be applied just as accurately to the fate of almost all the indigenous peoples of the world under ruthless subjugation by foreign colonial Powers, mestizo social elites, Creole Governments and the civil societies of our own countries that, entranced by the idea of "modernity", are losing their own identities, values and history and, consequently, their ability to move into the future with unity, creativity and dignity.

In order for our countries to emerge from underdevelopment, we must eliminate our profound internal social, economic and cultural differences. We must also recognize the relevance of our Indian heritage and banish any trace of discrimination against indigenous cultures and their subordination to so-called Western culture.

Since its inception the United Nations has shown the world what can be achieved when dialogue, concertation and negotiation are used as mechanisms to resolve the many differences that naturally arise between the countries of the world. Its contribution towards the achievement of world peace and respect for human rights and its invaluable support for our peoples' achievement of social and economic development in today's world are unquestionable.

My country, Ecuador, resolutely supports the United Nations Charter of principles, fulfils United Nations resolutions and agreements and considers that the United Nations makes an invaluable contribution towards the realization of our national aspirations in an international context of ever greater complexity.

It is with satisfaction and pride that we are witnessing one of the most illustrious periods in human history, characterized by the vigorous presence of the world's indigenous peoples in the world order. The faith and dynamism of indigenous peoples' organizational and creative process, springing from our roots and cultural identity, have enabled us to coexist and find new ways to consolidate our existence as peoples.

Our peoples — from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego, including the indigenous peoples of Canada and the United States, the descendants of the Mayas, Aztecs, Kunas, Wayuus, Quichuas, Aymaras, Tupis and Guaranis and the peoples of the Amazon and the Caribbean nations — have had to overcome many obstacles in order to finally find each other again and envisage, like brothers, a common destiny.

After an arduous journey we indigenous peoples of this and other continents have consolidated our brotherhood and defined strategies enabling us to struggle together against inequality and injustice. The unity of indigenous peoples is no longer the patrimony only of its sons and daughters; rather, it is becoming a legacy for all the peoples of the world in this time of conflict and violence, which, regrettably, persist in some parts of the world.

In spite of this encouraging vision of brotherhood and unity, the global situation of the indigenous peoples of the world continues to be critical, and the well-being of the indigenous population is at risk, especially as regards women and children.

Reports from international organizations, including the United Nations, indicate that indigenous populations are plunged into extreme poverty and plagued by ancient problems — lack of education, of housing and health, the deterioration of the environment, lack of jobs and diversified technology, lack of material and financial resources, the negative impact of the irrational use of renewable and non-renewable natural resources, the theft of intellectual, scientific and technological property which, far from contributing to their own development and well-being, in fact is used to serve political and economic interest groups.

International organizations and national Governments must now maximize their efforts and modify their practices in order to increase the technical and financial resources available to support the integral development of indigenous peoples with broad respect for their principles and cultural identity. In this connection it is imperative to bring about a radical change in attitudes that can allow us to put behind us that shameful assertion to the effect that investment in the development of indigenous peoples does not bear fruit. Instead, we must today go forward towards a greater and more decisive investment of resources and technology so that the indigenous peoples can consolidate their presence in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres.

These efforts cannot but facilitate harmonious development for the indigenous peoples and for mankind as a whole. Lack of action would be to perpetuate the poverty and unjust relationships that can jeopardize world peace.

The International Decade of the World's Indigenous People declared by the United Nations should be seen as universal recognition of the indigenous people for their invaluable efforts to protect and preserve the resources of mankind and to make the world livable. In addition, however, the Decade should provide an opportunity for all nations of the world to establish a new internal procedure designed to invigorate and develop the creative energy, thought and action of their peoples, their Governments and their institutions in order to take into account the indigenous peoples as vital components of their own existence.

Following the solemn declaration of the Decade, which in itself will mark a permanent milestone on the path to human dignity, we must henceforward put into practice these renewed and newly undertaken principles of action that the Decade demands and that will give body and spirit to the new strategies and policies of international organizations, national Governments and our own civil societies. Such changes in principles and attitudes will determine to a great extent the present and future of our countries and the fate of the indigenous populations of the world in general.

My country is fortunate in having had for over 20 years now a vigorous indigenous movement, highly organized and with a clear, peaceful vision and deep faith in the potential of our peoples. Similarly, the indigenous peoples of Ecuador, although generally ignored and left outside the mainstream of development, have managed not only to survive but to grow and to become stronger within the constraints of such critical conditions of life.

My country has begun to understand that, in order to attain social and economic development for the Ecuadorian population as a whole, it is indispensable and urgent that the indigenous peoples participate actively in our contemporary society. Our Government, under the leadership of President Sixto Duran-Ballen, has initiated a series of actions that have this objective in mind.

One of these actions was the creation in May of this year of the National Secretariat for Indigenous Affairs and Ethnic Minorities, over which I am proud to preside. The Secretariat's main objectives are: first, to plan and coordinate all Government action on behalf of the indigenous communities; secondly, to promote social and economical projects in those communities; and, thirdly, to revitalize the indigenous cultures within the broader framework of Ecuador's intercultural development.

It would be illusory to believe that after so many years of neglect and inattention on the part of earlier Governments and civil society in general, we can, from one day to another, resolve all of the acute problems facing the indigenous population. But what we do believe we can do is initiate an irreversible process of development based on dialogue, on a deep understanding of the aspirations of the indigenous peoples, on the strengthening of their organizations and on continuing support of any sound initiative, regardless of its source, that may improve the living conditions of our brothers and sisters.

The Government of President Duran-Ballen wants to establish a philosophy of responsibility, a commitment to work and honesty in our relationship with the indigenous peoples. We want to do away with the empty speeches, political manipulation and false hopes that traditional politicians in Ecuador have used, mainly as part of their electoral tactics towards the indigenous population.

Nevertheless, the road ahead will be long and complicated. The indigenous peoples in my country daily face many situations that threaten their survival and well-being as individuals and as peoples. Extreme poverty in Ecuador exists mainly among the indigenous and black populations.

The worst indicators regarding health, nutrition, literacy, environmental damage, lack of jobs, infant mortality, school drop-out rate and migration to the cities are all to be found mainly among the indigenous and black populations of the country.

As if this were not enough, the cultural alienation that we suffer, the scant attention given to indigenous and Afro-Equatorial cultures, the disdain for native languages and cultural values, are all serious threats that my people confront on a daily basis.

How do we begin to change this sad state of affairs? What must we do to bring these unquestionable facts home to Governments, civil society and international organizations so that they may gain awareness and thereby adopt the necessary decisions allowing us to begin, once and for all, to tackle these problems with determination and forcefulness? How do we ensure that the development strategies based on international cooperation and free trade can also take into account the situation of the indigenous peoples?

In the face of such a complex situation, which involves a high risk for the indigenous population, it could not be more timely for the United Nations to declare a Decade to benefit the indigenous peoples of the world. My country welcomes that decision and congratulates all who have worked to bring it about, especially the Goodwill Ambassador for the International Year, Ms. Rigoberta Menchú Tum.

In light of all this, from this high international forum and as a son of the Quechua People of the South American Andes, I make a profound and fraternal appeal that we inaugurate a new historic period for all mankind, in which the indigenous peoples of the world will assume an active role in the decision-making process on matters directly affecting their own fate as well as that of humanity as a whole. Let us put behind us the dark pages of our history; let us learn from the lessons of the past and not under any circumstances make the same mistakes again; let us have faith in our own energies and direct them towards achieving well-being, especially of women and children in the indigenous populations; let us thus embrace justice and equality for all.

We will then enter into the next millennium with great optimism, and this Decade will mark the beginning of a century of hope to which the indigenous peoples of the Americas and of other continents want to contribute, with all our efforts and with whatever sacrifice may be required, for the benefit of all our people and to contribute to the shaping of a world of equal rights for all.

The world must know that we the indigenous peoples are not willing to tolerate one more day of neglect, deceit and lack of respect for our identity, values, history and dignity. We will fight from every trench, peacefully, using our intelligence and our unity.

Like the brothers and sisters that we are, we will help each other and strengthen our potential through the exchange of experiences. We will welcome among us all the white and mestizo brothers and sisters who believe in our cause. We will propel our countries' economies. To fight corruption, we will establish a new ethical code that draws directly from the ancient indigenous morality. We will preserve our work ethic and our love for the land and nature and for human solidarity. We will give the world our spirit, simple but noble, our happiness, our trust and our tenderness. We will ask Pachacamac, the Great Spirit who has received the souls of Rumiñahui, Gerónimo, Caupolicán, Túpac-Amaru and all of our ancestors, to be with us always, so that those words that Dolores Cacoango, from Cayambe, Ecuador, spoke more than 50 years ago may come true:

> "We the Indians are like the hay that grows on the highlands of the Andes: the more it is cut the more it grows back, and even higher than before. Thus, like the hay, we will populate the world".

Mr. Camacho Omiste (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Bolivia welcomes the opening of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People. The indigenous peoples, estimated to number over 300 million, are a significant component of the international community. That is why the United Nations has been promoting the development of international rules to govern the recognition of the rights of those peoples of such varied cultural backgrounds. Of course, it will be necessary to do much more to end all forms of discrimination against and marginalization of these peoples. In the meantime, some international provisions are of particular importance, such as the International Labour Organisation's Convention 169, which constitutes an authentic model on this subject. There are other resolutions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and various agencies which are worthy of mention and which are being introduced into the national legislation of some States.

The special relationship of indigenous peoples with the land is of vital importance. That is why the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development points out that indigenous peoples and their communities have a vital role to play in environmental management and development because of their knowledge and traditional practices. The Declaration also includes the principle that States should recognize and duly support their identity, culture and interests and enable their effective participation in the achievement of sustainable development.

The designation of 1993 as the International Year of the World's Indigenous People gave the world community the impetus to examine the current situation, increase its awareness of this subject and show its determination to support the indigenous peoples not only by recognizing their rights but also by solving the problems they face.

Bolivia is a multiethnic and multicultural State. This is proclaimed in the State Political Constitution. The constitutional reform adopted this year through our new Article 171 states that in Bolivia:

> "The social, economic and cultural rights of the indigenous peoples inhabiting the national territory are recognized, respected and protected within the framework of the law, especially those rights relating to their traditional community lands, and the use and sustainable management of the natural resources and their identity, values, languages, customs and institutions are guaranteed."

As President Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada said in his statement to the General Assembly, in Bolivia participation is no longer a mere word. We are proud that today, after 500 years, an indigenous, intellectual Aymara, Victor Hugo Cárdenas, is Vice-President of the Republic. This fact reflects, more than any words could do, the change we are promoting — a change with an order and order with change, so that the majorities which have hitherto been segregated can gain access to power through the ballot box and not through violence, and so that change can take place in democracy and not against it.

The Law of Participation by the People, which was also adopted this year, promotes and consolidates the presence of rural and urban indigenous communities in the political and economic life of the country. It also recognizes the representatives of grass-roots territorial organizations, designated in accordance with their practices, customs and statutory provisions.

Moreover, the educational reform now under way will ensure that in Bolivia children learn to read in their mother tongue, thereby respecting the multicultural and multiethnic nature of our society. On the basis of this reform, the children of our Aymara, Quechua, Guaraní and Amazonian peoples will learn to read in their own languages and only after that will learn to speak, read and write in Spanish and other languages. In other words, this process will respect and strengthen their identity while preparing our people for better participation in the modern world.

The aforementioned legal instruments constitute real milestones in the history of Bolivia, which is determined to make its representative democracy an increasingly participatory process.

As an advance tribute to the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, the Government of Bolivia convinced a meeting of representatives of Latin American Governments, grass-roots peasant organizations and international and cooperation agencies, in the city of Cochabamba in June.

Mrs. Rigoberta Menchú Tum was asked to prepare a document, to serve as a basis for the meeting, that would reflect the basic elements which, from her experience, could become common proposals of the Governments and indigenous peoples of the region. The meeting framed a series of recommendations to be included in the strategy of the Decade. Those recommendations were brought to the attention of Governments and the United Nations system. In this connection, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bolivia, Antonio Aranîbar Quiroga, in his statement to the General Assembly in September, repeated that:

> "My country is confident that the observance of this Decade will be not merely symbolic, but essentially a practical and concrete endeavour in its objectives and its scope." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Plenary Meetings, 9th meeting, p. 27)*

The Programme of Action for the Decade must be oriented towards establishing a new type of relationship with the indigenous peoples ensuring recognition of their identity and of their historic rights, as well as ensuring respect for their institutions and guaranteeing their participation in all aspects of society and, in particular, as regards questions of concern to them.

In response to these requests, the organs of the United Nations and its specialized agencies should take the initiative to see to it that, in the regular and special budgets as well as in extra-budgetary funds, the needed resources are allocated for the implementation of the activities of the decade.

In this connection, I wish to inform the Assembly that at the regional level and by decision of the Heads of State or Government of the Ibero-American countries, the Fund for the Development of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean has been established, with headquarters in La Paz, Bolivia. We are also pleased to inform the Assembly that the Fund is in force thanks to the ratification of the Constituent Agreement by a growing number of States, including Mexico, Peru, Panama, Ecuador, Paraguay, Spain and Bolivia. We are certain that in the near future the Fund will be strengthened institutionally and that it will play an outstanding role in the implementation of the tasks for which it was established, in the certainty that it will contribute effectively to the success of the Decade that we inaugurate today.

The Government of Bolivia congratulates the General Assembly on the proclamation of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People and appeals to the Governments of Member States, in cooperation with the indigenous populations, to contribute resolutely to the success of the activities to be conducted during the Decade.

Mr. Flores Olea (Mexico) *(interpretation from Spanish):* Mexico is proud of its indigenous past and recognizes that its history, its culture and its institutions are also the product of its indigenous roots, of that great tradition which is not always recognized and which, none the less, shapes us, our identity, our lives and our personality.

Of course, Mexico has always recognized its mestizo nature — the fact that we are the product of two sources which, in many senses, complemented each other and resulted in a new culture and a new personality. None the less it cannot be denied that, in spite of the indigenous cultural roots that today define our personality in the political, economic and social areas, the indigenous peoples of Mexico have often been left out and marginalized, far from the decision-making centres and the focal points of development.

This must be stated with the utmost sincerity because it forms the necessary basis and the vital ethical attitude necessary for corrective action to be taken, for a broad programme to be initiated that not only recognizes the rights of the indigenous populations but is also able to open up new opportunities for them — real choices for life and development.

As it has almost always been the case in the history of our peoples, in Mexico we have, in varying degrees according to the times, encountered: hostility, subordination and ignorance coexisting with recognition of cultural greatness, of the virtues of tradition and of the value of the distinct personality of the indigenous peoples.

In any event, at the constitutional level, we in Mexico today recognize the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature of the country and, hence, the dignity of the indigenous peoples. For a number of reasons, this is clearly a time of understanding and of appreciation of the indigenous populations. Among them, we cannot ignore the incredible developments in the media which, above and beyond the uniformity of values they produce, also stimulate contacts, spread knowledge and promote interplay among cultures. Mention must also be made of the intensification of migrations and of the crumbling of the bipolar world, which had led to the coercion of peoples and the standardization of their aspirations and cultures.

Recognition of the plurality of cultures and of the legitimacy and dignity of all cultures as a mark of civilization should be universally accepted today. Unfortunately, we are also living in a time of contradiction: the universality of contacts among peoples and cultures — the creative diversity and the spiritual richness generated by shared experiences — is now being sorely tested in outbreaks of racism and xenophobia. We must also recognize that in virtually all parts of the world the indigenous populations comprise the poorest groups and, almost always, groups in abject poverty. Therefore, the struggle against poverty is also the struggle for the well-being of indigenous populations.

The Government of Mexico is aware that priority attention to indigenous problems is an essential element in the present and future stability of countries. We wish to reiterate that understanding and negotiation are the only viable means of resolving the complex situation of the indigenous peoples. In the specific case of Mexico, the Government has reaffirmed its commitment to a homeland of peace, with its desire to establish a nation of equity - a Mexico with justice for all. Hence, we reiterate our readiness to redouble our efforts to achieve concerted solutions without violence — solutions based on harmony, democracy and opportunities for equitable development.

The International Decade of the World's Indigenous People presupposes first and foremost a recognition of the plurality and diversity of cultures and, even more, recognition of their dignity, of their own irreplaceable values. It also presupposes recognition of the rights of the indigenous peoples as individual human rights but also as collective rights and as social rights.

This means the recognition and acceptance of the ability of the indigenous peoples to preserve their values and their traditions, including the ability to preserve their own forms of social organization.

The delegation of Mexico has already made specific comments in the Third Committee of the General Assembly on the draft programme of action for the Decade. We wish nonetheless to reiterate the importance of having the Decade celebrated in national, regional and international spheres through specific activities that will be of tangible benefit to the indigenous people of the world.

We believe that it is important that the Programme of Action for the Decade should incorporate certain fundamental themes related to the development of the indigenous people, international cooperation to support such development, the granting of resources and the financing of development projects that are formulated by indigenous people themselves. Likewise, we believe the themes of the Decade should be biennial and should focus on the topics identified in General Assembly resolution 48/163, namely, human rights, the environment, development, education and health.

Mexico will pay particular attention to the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system and to their participation in the different working groups. This is a real demand on the part of the indigenous people, a demand, which must be met. For this reason, Mexico is in favour of establishing such a permanent forum in which indigenous representatives of all the regions of the world will be able to participate and express their views. There is no doubt that the participation of indigenous people in the activities of the United Nations will significantly strengthen our Organization.

The launching of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People is a positive political sign, one which recognizes the need to establish a new relationship with our indigenous people. Today undoubtedly heralds a historic event for our Organization. It means the fulfilment of an important longing and constitute an act of justice for millions of indigenous people who, in many parts of the world, are victims largely of poverty, marginalization and oppression. The delegation of Mexico firmly supports the proclamation of this Decade and its Programme of Action and expresses its hope that these will contribute in a significant way to the improvement of the situation of indigenous peoples the world over.

Mr. López Pulecio (Colombia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In the beginning, we were all indigenous people. Then, at the borders of the ancient kingdoms the conquerors appeared with their great ships and their arrogance, their invincible weapons and their all-powerful gods. Ancient civilizations of stone that believed their time had come, crumbled, stupefied before the white man.

Then, we were no longer all indigenous peoples, because that nature which so intimately revealed the truth of our roots was reduced to a form of marginalization, discrimination, servitude. The descendants of the great princes became slaves, vassals of the plough. They were forced increasingly into the least productive lands, socially chastized for their obstinate desire to cling to practices that were those of a conquered people, exploited mercilessly. "On the back of an Indian" was an expression used in Colombia in colonial days when the natives were used as means of transportation to cross the impossible mountain paths. And they were always in a subordinate position, never coming of age, considered unable to assume the supreme virtues of the civilization that had conquered them.

Thus was consummated what may perhaps be the greatest act of genocide in history, the genocide of the aboriginal peoples of Asia, Africa and America in the process of building the empires of today.

Centuries have passed since then and the world has begun to turn its gaze to those survivors who are clinging like victims of a shipwreck to what remains of their possessions. In spite of centuries of domination, a domination that still exists in many places they have the wisdom to preserve what is theirs.

And what is theirs is vast and very beautiful. The modern world has at last understood that the sacred nature of the relationship between man and the Earth is essential to the survival of humanity. The most sophisticated cultures can learn a great lesson from the indigenous communities, who have preserved intact the small world left to them by the conquest, a world where one can still detect the colonizers of today standing with laws and guns in their ambitious hands.

If there is anyone to whom modern society, countries and the international community have a social debt to pay, it is the indigenous communities. What has been done in recent years to recognize and protect their values, their practices, their creations, their language, their beliefs and their land, is no more than a partial payment of that enormous debt.

The purpose of this endeavour must be to include indigenous communities in the full enjoyment of the rights and obligations that any national of a State has, with respect for their cultural identity and within the framework of a careful policy of protecting what in the past attempts were made to destroy so cruelly.

The Government of Colombia has supported and enthusiastically continues to support the celebration of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People as a United Nations programme which can draw attention to a forgotten world and which can emphasize the fundamental equality of that world and its right to raise its voice before the international community in defence of what belongs to it.

The Government of Colombia has pursued a policy of strengthening its indigenous communities and an ongoing process of recognizing their special importance in the life of Colombia, where nearly 80 indigenous ethnic groups comprise a population of over a million persons: one out of 33 Colombians is an indigenous person. These communities achieved major political representation and participation through the new political Constitution adopted in 1991 and through the broad process of indigenous organization and mobilization that began more than 25 years ago.

In the Constitution significant progress was made in recognizing the legal, social and political equality of all the country's cultures. That equality is the backbone of our new constitutional norms. Article 7 of the Constitution decrees that

> "The State recognizes and protects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the Colombian nation",

and article 8 recognizes that

> "It is the obligation of the State and of persons to protect the cultural and natural wealth of the nation".

Article 70 stipulates that

> "The State has the duty to promote and encourage access to culture by all Colombians through equal

> opportunities, ongoing education and scientific, technical, artistic and professional training during all stages of creating a national identity.
>
> "Culture in all its manifestations is the foundation of nationhood. The State recognizes the equality and dignity of all who live in the country. The State shall promote research, science, development and the dissemination of the nation's cultural values".

Article 10 of the Constitution, while declaring Spanish to be the official language of Colombia, establishes that

> "the languages and dialects of ethnic groups are also official on their territories. Teaching in communities with their own linguistic traditions shall be bilingual".

Finally, articles 230 and 246 recognize the political and legal autonomy of indigenous communities, which shall be exercised in conformity with their practices and customs, so long as these do not contradict the Constitution or the law.

Another pillar of Colombia's policy on indigenous peoples is our ratification, through Law 21 of 1991, of the International Labour Organisation Convention 169 on indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries, which consecrates respect for their culture, religion, social structure and customary law and for the right of indigenous peoples to participate jointly with the State in programmes relating to their own development.

The President returned to the Chair.

My country has the political will to ensure that these laws are reflected in effective measures to assist and protect indigenous ethnic groups. The programme of the Government of President Ernesto Samper known as the "social leap forward" is aimed at improving living standards for the poorest, most vulnerable, most isolated, least educated groups, including the indigenous population.

In connection with the activities of the Decade, Colombia participated in the regional preparatory meeting held at Cochabamba, Bolivia, where recommendations were developed for Latin American and Caribbean Governments to give concrete form to the Decade. Those proposals have been submitted to Governments for their comments and observations with a view to consolidating an official regional proposal.

We also participated in the July 1994 meeting held to draw conclusions from the activities of the International Year of the World's Indigenous People and to formulate a plan of action and a plan for financing the International Decade. At that meeting, a report was submitted on policies developed for participation and cooperation between the State and indigenous organizations. This enabled us to set up the National Council for Indigenous Policy, the Committee on Indigenous Human Rights, regional and local inter-institutional coordination committees, the Mining Oversight Council, and national committees on health and education. Through those bodies, indigenous people can state their problems, and joint solutions can be sought.

It is worth noting our work to define and put in place procedures for demarcating indigenous territorial entities, which will form part of the Colombian State's administrative political structure. Today in Colombia, more than 26 million hectares are protected as indigenous preserves.

One day, in one of those preserves, in Colombia's Andes mountains, which the Spanish conquest never reached, the earth cried out with the roar of a thousand wild beasts, and the remote, miserably poor, sacred land of the Paeces crumbled in an avalanche that was the climax of centuries of abandonment. The victims of that tragedy appeared on the shores of civilization and gained the kind of attention they had never had. What they were given was poor compensation for what they had lost: their land.

My country's indigenous Paeca people do not need new land; they need their own land, because in their world view the land does not belong the Paecas, but the Paecas to the land. Their gods, their ancestors and life itself come from the land. They believe that felling the trees will bring down the heavens.

How can our comfortable civilization come closer to them without violating the very essence of their spirit and their culture? How can we learn from their age-old wisdom, by which they survived centuries of domination, in their own environment — with the time, as the brave Kuna warriors of the Colombian Amazon were supposed to have said, to listen to their own hearts? No harm came to them and they were not drawn into the consumer society, with all its anguish.

Indigenous tribes are the poorest communities of the countries in which they live, but they are certainly not the least wise. Are our values superior to theirs? Is our world view richer? Might we not learn from their way of approaching the world as a blessing of the gods rather than a commodity for mass consumption?

At last we have a splendid opportunity for genuine dialogue between civilizations, which is possible only on the basis of equality among the interlocutors.

Neither in Latin America nor anywhere else in the world are there people whose rights have been more violated, whose communities have been more dispersed, whose cultures have been more casually destroyed than the indigenous populations. Those who remain are the survivors of innumerable conquests. Our world owes each of them an enormous debt. The amount of that debt is measured in the steady plundering of what is most valuable to them: their bond with their own world, which must be restored through an educational process that can inform them about their values and can guarantee them a place on the earth to which they belong, where they can worship their gods with the dignity of free human beings. Perhaps then we can all be indigenous peoples again, as we were in the beginning.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.